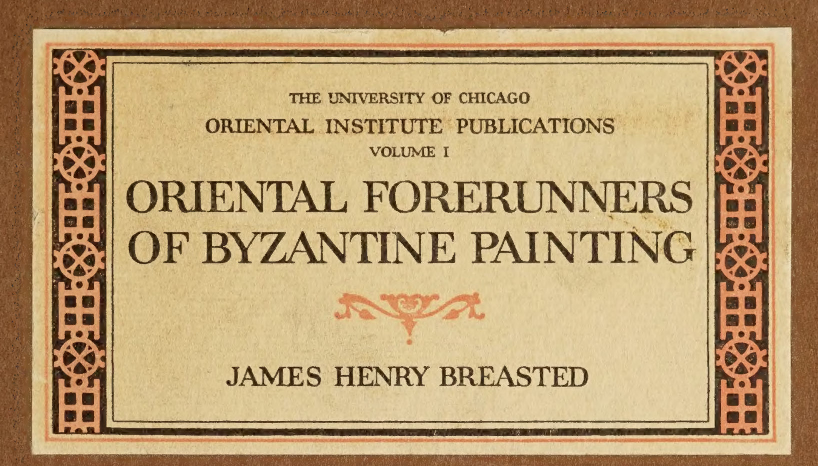
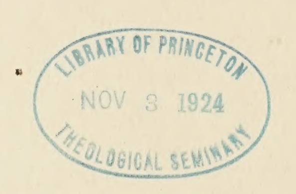
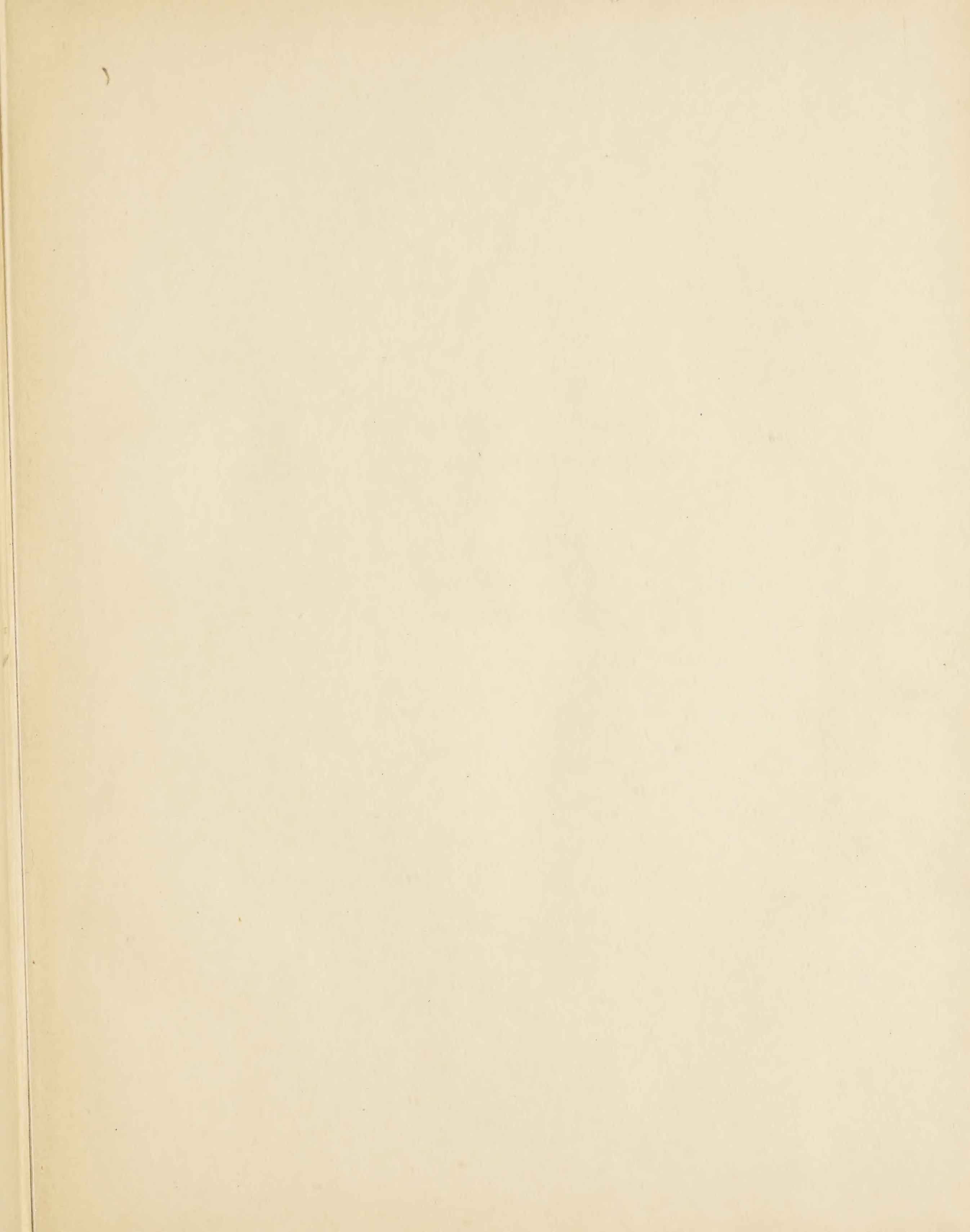


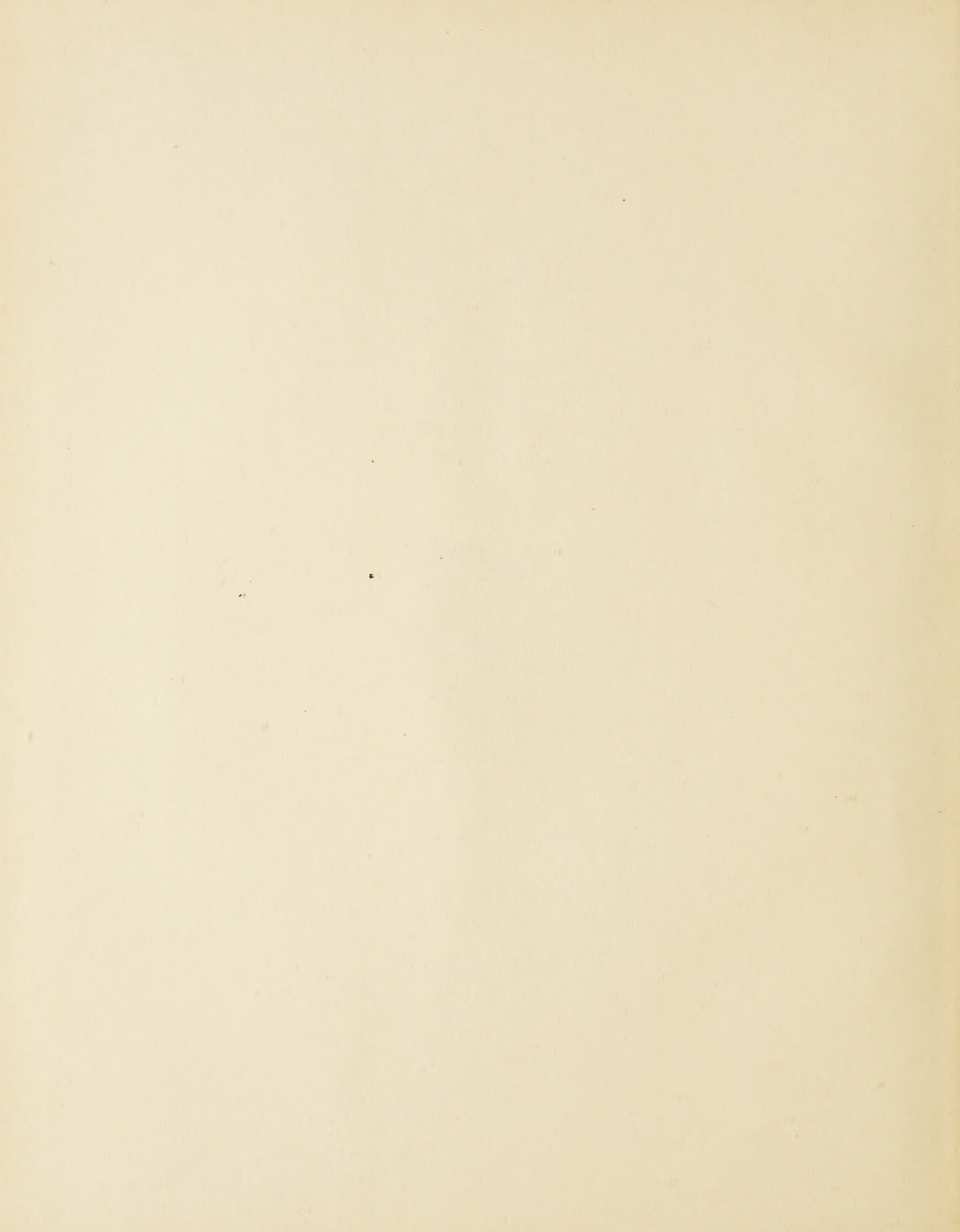
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VOLUME I

ORIENTAL FORERUNNERS OF BYZANTINE PAINTING

JAMES HENRY BREASTED



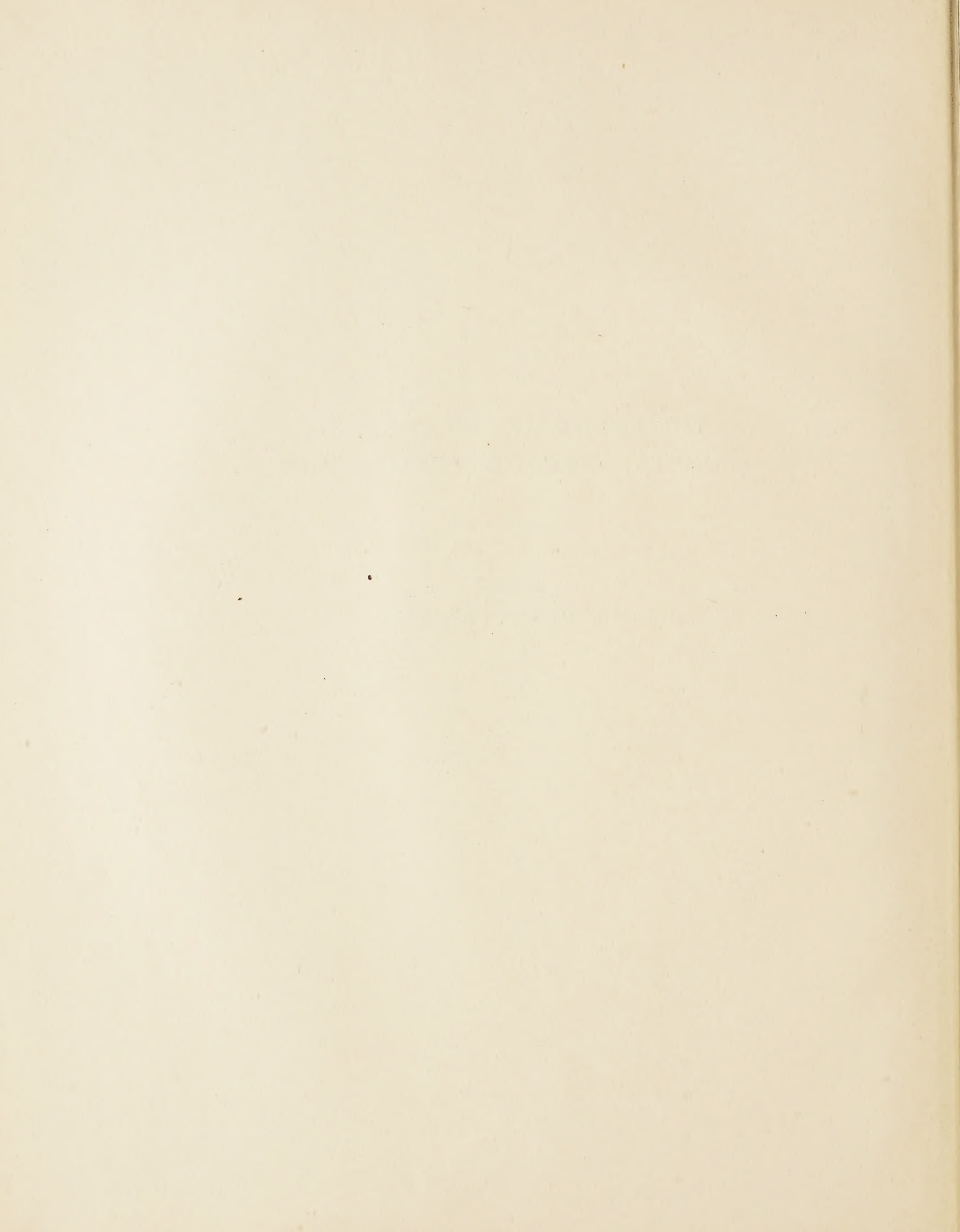




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Pl. X. — The Wall of Bithnanaïa in Hall II : Head of the Second figure

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
ORIENTAL INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS
VOLUME I

ORIENTAL FORERUNNERS OF BYZANTINE PAINTING

FIRST-CENTURY WALL PAINTINGS FROM THE FORTRESS OF DURA ON THE MIDDLE EUPHRATES

By
JAMES HENRY BREASTED



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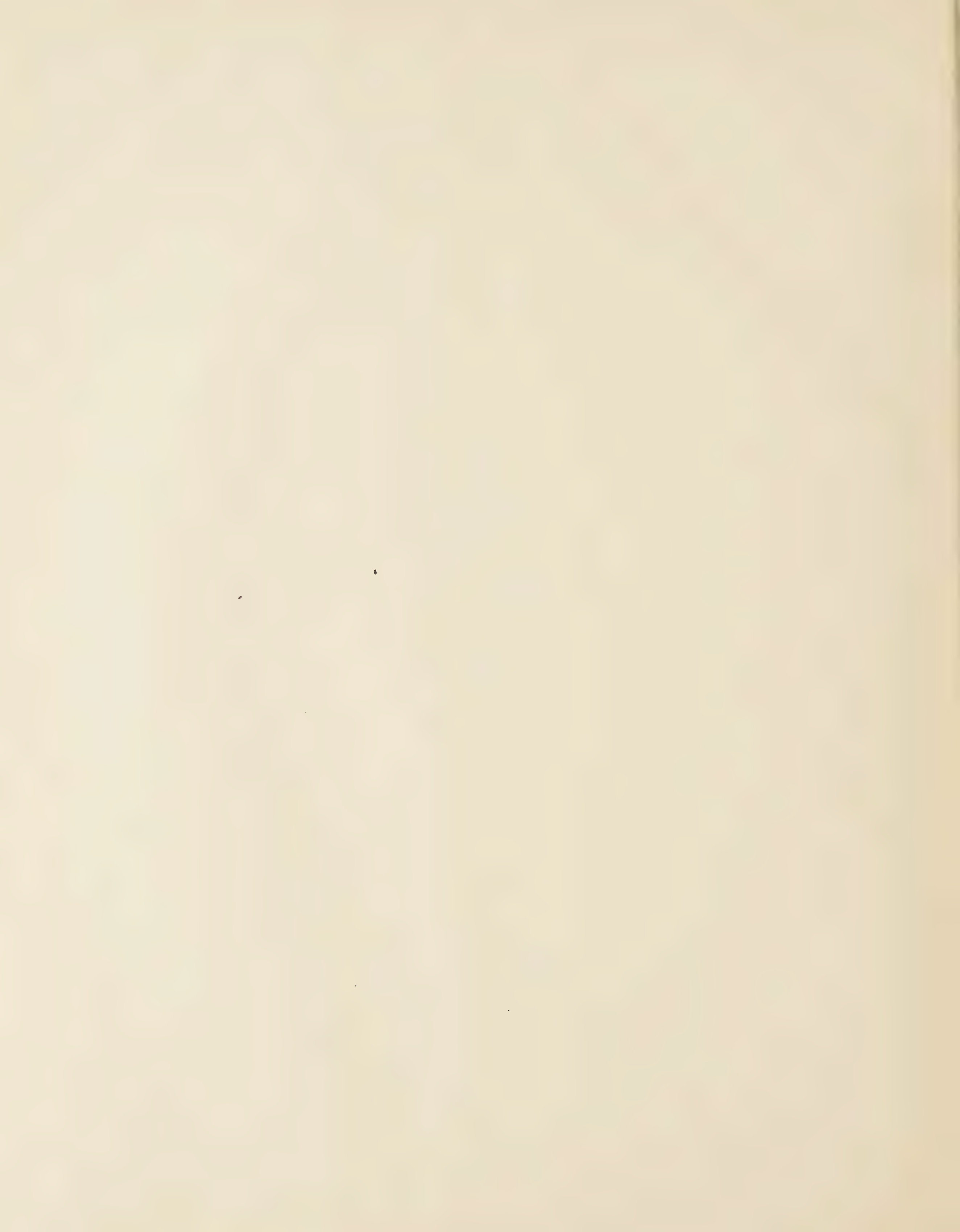
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TO

FRANZ CUMONT

IN

ADMIRATION AND REGARD



PREFACE

Our only archaeological predecessors at the ancient frontier stronghold of the Seleucids on the middle Euphrates, with which this volume deals, called it "the nameless city."[1] Three years ago, indeed, the name of Dura was known to us only in a few unnoticed passages of Greek and Latin sources, and it is safe to affirm that few if any students of the ancient world knew that such a place ever existed. Buried in the heart of the Syrian Desert, the ruin to which this name once belonged had been forgotten fifteen hundred years ago. Its situation, 140 miles beyond the desert metropolis of Palmyra, saved it from the destruction which overtook the latter city at the hands of Aurelian in A.D. 273, and at the same time left it so far beyond the reach of modern archaeological observation that it has remained a lost city for fifteen centuries.

In this lost city on the outer fringes of the Roman Empire in Asia were thus preserved the only surviving oriental forerunners of Byzantine painting, out of which arose the pre-Renaissance painting of Europe. Moreover, the city of Dura itself is a unique survival. A city left like a wave-mark on the oriental desert by the receding tide of Graeco-Macedonian invasion under Alexander and his successors, it became an oriental home of Hellenistic culture, a center of Graeco-Syrian civilization, too inaccessible and too far from the Mediterranean to be built over and engulfed by later Roman structures. Untouched, therefore, by the Roman demolition so common in cities of its age, the Hellenistic strata lie almost on the surface, unaltered by Roman or Byzantine occupation. Forsaken at last and buried under a protecting mantle of desert sand, its monuments and works of art have suffered little from the relatively scanty rainfall, which did not penetrate deep enough to do any damage below.

Dura lies in the debatable ground between Syria and the Mediterranean world on the west and Mesopotamia on the east and north. It was the good fortune of the University of Chicago expedition to make the first dash undertaken by white men after the Great War across this desert region and the newly proclaimed Arab state, from Baghdad to Aleppo and the Mediterranean. The story of this journey has been briefly told in the first bulletin of the new Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.[2] Creeping up the Euphrates as quietly and as expeditiously as we could, and making every effort to elude the treacherous and hostile Beduin, we reached

[1] "Die namenlose Stadt," Sarre and Herzfeld, *Archaeologische Reise im Euphrat- und Tigris-Gebiet,* II, 394 f. Berlin, 1920.

[2] See the present writer's report, "The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago: A Beginning and a Program," *Oriental Institute Communications No. 1.* University of Chicago Press, 1922.

Dura-Ṣâliḥîyah just as the British were about to begin their retirement down river. After a hasty preliminary inspection for which we ran up by automobile from the British headquarters at Albu Kamâl, we found ourselves at Dura with but a single day which we could devote to making our records of the place. Without the protection of the British Indian troops it was not safe to remain a moment longer at Dura, and this first publication of the Oriental Institute therefore represents *a single day's field work of the expedition.*

Notwithstanding the unavoidably hurried character of our records at Dura, the ancient wall paintings which we found there have aroused an interest which has called for some report of them. The further fact that the most important of the wall paintings recorded has since been so seriously damaged by the Arabs that our records are now the capital source for knowledge of it, has emphasized the need of a publication of these unique documents for the use of historians, archaeologists, and art students. Their chief importance lies in their evident character as cultural links between the Orient and later Europe. The reader who will examine the mosaics from the church of San Vitale at Ravenna (Plate XXII) and compare them with the largest of the Dura wall paintings (Plate VIII), will not long be in doubt that we have in these Dura paintings a part of the heretofore lost oriental ancestry of Byzantine art.

At the invitation of the *Académie des Inscriptions,* therefore, the present writer read a communication before its members at the session of July 7, 1922, briefly reporting on the paintings, and at the same time exhibiting enlarged photographs in colors. The editors of *Syria* expressed such interest in the discovery that it seemed appropriate to give to them the manuscript of this communication read before the *Académie* for publication, together with the colored photographs. From the beginning the eminent Belgian scholar Franz Cumont, a foreign member of the *Académie,* had displayed the greatest interest in the whole question of the Dura documents, which I had previously showed to him on his last visit to America. With his customary generosity he gave the enterprise unlimited time and placed his encyclopedic knowledge unreservedly at my disposal. He translated into French the text of my communication to the *Académie,* and added valuable suggestions and observations of his own. He also wrote a *Note additionnelle* further discussing the subject, and the whole was published with the color plates in *Syria* (III, 177–213, and Plates XXXI–L).[1] For all his kindness and invaluable aid it is a pleasant duty to express here my sincere thanks to my friend, M. Cumont.

[1] The color plates were also published in *Les Travaux Archéologiques en Syrie de 1920 à 1922* (Service des Antiquités et des Beaux-Arts) "Publication faite à l' occasion de l'Exposition de Marseille" (1922), Paul Geuthner, Paris, 1923, accompanied by a discussion furnished by M. Cumont, entitled: "Les Fresques d'Epoque Romaine Relevées par M. Breasted à Es-Ṣâliḥîye sur l'Euphrate," pp. 48–54. An account of his first campaign of excavation at the place was also appended by M. Cumont, "Les Fouilles de Ṣâliḥîyeh sur l'Euphrate," *ibid.*, pp. 55–75. These essays of M. Cumont will be referred to herein as *Les Travaux Archéologiques.*

Interest in the matter did not stop here. I had asked the now lamented Clermont-Ganneau whether he thought it would be possible for us to secure an air photograph of the great Dura fortress by the aid of the French Air Force in Syria. He at once wrote to General Gouraud at Beirût and raised the question of the possibility of further investigation of the whole ruin at Dura-Ṣâliḥîyah. At the same time M. Cumont was also very active in promoting interest in the matter, especially in the possibility of excavating and recovering the other paintings of Dura, of which we had seen traces but which we had not been able to excavate, as well as the wall of the tribune which we had not been able to record satisfactorily because of our enforced departure. General Gouraud responded with an offer to send troops to the fortress to aid in excavation and also to protect the archaeologists in their study of the place. My friend Cumont cordially urged me to go and gave me every opportunity to continue the work which our hurried passage had only permitted us to begin. Obligations in Egypt, however, did not permit me to accept the invitation, and M. Cumont, therefore, undertook alone the commission of the *Académie des Inscriptions* to proceed to Dura under the protection of French troops. With adequate time, and with the French infantry available not only for doing the actual work of excavation, but also for the military protection indispensable in this turbulent region, M. Cumont took up the work at Dura with great success. He cleared a part of the Hellenistic city within the fortifications; he found three more public buildings; he actually found a parchment fragment containing a portion of the Hellenistic laws of the place; he found inscriptions dating the temple paintings with certainty; and he excavated the other painted wall which our hurried departure did not permit us to investigate. On these results of his work at Dura he is to be heartily congratulated. He has published three reports on this work preliminary to fuller publication.[1] I am indebted to his kindness for sending me in manuscript his report in *Syria* in advance of publication, from which I have drawn valuable new facts resulting from his excavations.

While on his return journey from Dura-Ṣâliḥîyah, M. Cumont sent me the following letter which is of importance to readers of this book.

Between Hama and Homs
23 November, 1922

My Dear Friend:

At the moment of passing Kadesh it occurs to me to give you a few details of my work at Ṣâliḥîyah, whence I am returning. On my arrival there the 7th of November, I found 250 soldiers camped in the enclosure which you have described and before my arrival they had already cleared the whole chapel. I found the great sacrificial scene (wall of Bithnanaia) published by you, already terribly injured. The sand with which the Indian soldiers had

[1] *Comptes rendus Acad. des Inscr.* (1923), pp. 12–41; *Syria*, IV (1923), 38–58; and *Les Travaux Archéologiques* (see preceding note), pp. 55–75.

covered it had not withstood the desert winds and the rains. The officers told me that on their arrival they found all the faces mutilated by the Bedawin and the rest of the scene had faded considerably in two years under the action of the sun and the rains. We found practically intact only the small figures in the lower part of the scene.

Your plates in color will remain the capital documents for the study of this painting and it is fortunate that you were in a position to make such good reproductions of it before it was destroyed. Of the picture of the Roman tribune, which you photographed in unfavorable circumstances, we were able to obtain better reproductions.

In addition we were able to study, photograph and copy in color a large fresco, unfortunately in rather poor condition, which occupies in the first hall the wall corresponding to that of Bithnanaia (four personages sacrificing).

We also carefully recorded all the little pictures which you saw in the evening near the tribune.

There are inscriptions which throw new light on the question of the date of these paintings. One in Greek commemorates either the foundation of the sanctuary itself, or rather that of one of its dependent structures. It is of the year 114 (A.D.) and states expressly that this is a temple of Zeus(-Baal). The other dedication is in Latin and was placed in honor of Alexander Severus by a Palmyrene cohort.

In the middle of the temple court rose an altar. This court was surrounded by the habitations of the priests and hierodules and was contiguous to a large outer court or square surrounded by a portico.

It is evident—and this is the chief result of our excavations—that the *enceinte* of Ṣâliḥîyah contained a Greek city which can only be Dura-Europos. The city is laid out with streets at right angles (already the "block" system) and several of its buildings have been brought to light: a sort of small theater or audience hall, a sanctuary furnished with steps each of which bears the name of him who had the right to occupy it, etc. Near this point two statues were brought to light of which one, of marble, is very fine. The earliest date which was recorded is A.D. 31.

The most interesting of the graffiti contain lists of objects belonging to the temple. They show that along with Zeus the Palmyrene gods Aglibol and Yarhibol were also worshipped.

Among the various objects found the most unexpected were some fragments of parchment bearing the remains of writing which were exhumed in the course of a tour of the fortifications.

The necropolis lay outside the city beyond the west wall and contained a large number of burial caves originally surmounted by circular or rectangular superstructures.

This in a few words constitutes what new facts we have learned about Dura. You can see that our investigations have not rendered yours valueless but that on the contrary they complete the results that you were able to obtain two years ago. I wanted to inform you at once in these few lines of the result of my journey. As soon as I reach Paris I shall make a report of my expedition to the *Académie* and I shall send it to you as soon as it is printed. I hope to find on my return the number of *Syria* containing your article and I hope that the color plates may be equal to our hopes.

Believe me always

Your cordially devoted friend,

FRANZ CUMONT

P.S.: The frescos were carefully covered this time under a layer of sand retained by a stone wall.

In a second letter M. Cumont adds several more important items:

Certainly your color plates [of Dura] ought to be republished with a commentary in English. They are the only documents which we have that show the condition of the great fresco at the time of its discovery.

If you wish to publish my letter I put it entirely at your disposition, but it does not mention some of the most important things. I wrote it on the train before having studied carefully the notes which I had made. I should add that one of the new frescos is signed and that the name of the artist is Semitic and not Greek. His name is *Ilasamsos*, "the Sun is god." There are also other points which you will perhaps wish to mention in the English article. For example Clermont-Ganneau has expressed the opinion that in the frescos of the tribune the three statues are not those of emperors but of the three Palmyrene gods, Baal, Aglibol, and Yarhibol in war panoply, and I am inclined to think that he is right.

It will be seen, therefore, that the lamentable destruction of the great painting (wall of Bithnanaia, Plate VIII) has made it impossible to secure any fuller or more accurate records of it than we were able to make in the single day which the impending British evacuation permitted us to make. Following M. Cumont's recommendation, therefore, the Oriental Institute is issuing as full a publication as possible of the work it was able to do at Dura, and adding also the new data resulting from M. Cumont's excavations. Students of art and history will find in these documents a new vista leading back from Byzantine art to an earlier oriental background. It reveals at the same time with increased clearness the position of the Roman Empire on the Euphrates both before and after the advance of Trajan, and especially the ceaseless interpenetration of Orient and Occident especially evident after the campaigns of Alexander the Great, although evident to the orientalist as far back at least as the dawn of the Age of Metal in Europe (about 3000 B.C.), and with hardly a doubt even much earlier. These unique documents, therefore, illustrate very clearly the process which it is the duty and function of the Institute to investigate and as far as possible to recover.

It would seem appropriate, therefore, that this first volume of the Oriental Institute Publications should offer in this connection a brief statement concerning the origin and purpose of the Institute itself. Founded by the generosity of Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and the enlightened co-operation of the Trustees of the University of Chicago, the Oriental Institute is a laboratory for historical research. It is intended to furnish a means of organizing the members of the teaching staff of the Department of Oriental Languages, together with members of the Institute from the outside, into a body of investigators and at the same time to make accessible to them all the original documents which can be made available, either by purchase, by copying, or by any feasible method of collecting and gathering into the archives of the Institute the surviving records of the ancient Orient. The region to which the Oriental Institute purposes to devote its chief attention is commonly called the Near East, by which we mean the eastern Mediterranean world and the adjacent regions eastward, at least through Persia. It is now quite evident that civilization arose in this region and passed

thence to Europe. In the broadest general terms, therefore, the task of the Oriental Institute is the study of the origins of civilization, the history of the earliest civilized societies, the transition of civilization to Europe, and the relations of the Orient to the great civilizations of Europe after the cultural leadership of the world had passed from the Orient to European peoples.

In illustration of the foregoing program, I may be permitted to mention some of the enterprises which the Institute thus far has undertaken. In the winter of 1919–20 the Institute undertook a preliminary inspection of the accessible regions of the Near East, for the collection of original monuments and documents and the study of the monuments *in situ.* The journey included the voyage of the Nile as far as Thebes, and in Western Asia a reconnaissance of the Babylonian Plain, the upper Tigris as far as the mountains north of Mosul, where the party was stopped by the hostile Kurds, the return to Baghdad, the ascent of the Euphrates and the return to the Mediterranean via Aleppo, the coast of Phoenicia, and parts of Palestine. On this journey a considerable body of valuable original sources, both written and unwritten, was acquired by purchase.

The study of the documents of Western Asia is in pressing need of an exhaustive Babylonian and Assyrian dictionary. With a resident staff of five people and with the co-operation of a number of outside scholars the Institute has been engaged for over two years in the compilation of this much needed dictionary, which is progressing at the rate of nearly 100,000 cards a year. At present the files contain about 300,000 cards. It is hoped that the dictionary may be completed within eight years more.

At the same time the administrative staff of the Institute has been at work endeavoring to organize the existent sources of knowledge regarding the ancient history of the Near East. These materials take the form of a subject catalogue alphabetically arranged on cards, and filed in drawers like a library catalogue. This project, therefore, aims at an encyclopedic organization of subjects which if completed would enable the investigator to turn to any important subject in the range of Near Eastern civilization and history, and to find collected under that subject all the material throwing light upon it, whether in modern books and treatises or in ancient original documents and monuments. That such completeness never will be wholly attainable is obvious, but even in an incomplete stage such an organization of materials is indispensable to the purposes of the Institute. These archives now contain about 35,000 cards. In view of our lack of a sufficient Egyptian dictionary, one of the specialized sections of these archives is devoted to a collection of all Egyptian words which have anywhere been especially discussed by particular scholars in oriental journals and treatises.

Among the great bodies of original documents surviving from the ancient Orient none is more important or difficult than the religious compositions. The study of such documents is still in its infancy. Our understanding of the Egyptian Book of

the Dead is conditioned by our knowledge of the older Egyptian literature out of which the Book of the Dead was built up. The current translations of the Book of the Dead are quite worthless for this reason. It is necessary, therefore, to collect and study the religious documents which were the predecessors of the Book of the Dead. Of the *Pyramid Texts*, the archaic religious documents which are written in the chambers and passages of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasty pyramids, and which contain the oldest religious literature available in any language, we have had an adequate edition since 1910. On the other hand the *Coffin Texts*, the extraordinary mortuary literature inscribed in ink on the insides of the Middle Kingdom wooden coffins dating from the half millennium of which the middle falls at about 2000 B.C., has been but little collected and studied. The Institute has, therefore, undertaken the collection, editing, and publication of all these materials. The work began in the winter of 1922–23 in the great collection of the Cairo Museum. The task of making a complete photographic record of the Cairo coffins is nearly finished and a considerable beginning on the accompanying hand copies has been made. The European and American museums will be included later, until all the known Coffin Texts have been incorporated in the Institute records. Out of this complete body of copies a standard edition of the Coffin Texts will be made, on the basis of which an understanding of the Book of the Dead will be possible. This will, of course, be a work of years.

Another important class of documents consists of those which embody proverbial wisdom in animal stories. Probably few readers of the delectable Uncle Remus tales have realized that these seemingly American stories found their way into the cabins of our southern negroes from the slave markets of eastern Africa, whither they had wandered from a remoter and an earlier Orient. Besides the East Indian sources, the oriental originals are at present chiefly Arabic and Syriac manuscripts; but such tales circulated as early as the Assyrian Empire in Western Asia, and fragments of them are still found in cuneiform tablets, while in their oldest known form they have survived in delightful sketches on papyrus by Egyptian artists who cleverly depict human relations in the animal world. These amusing caricatures probably go back to the fourteenth or fifteenth century B.C. Besides the line of descent to us through the African slave markets, there is another through England, where the oriental animal tales were translated by Sir Thomas North from Spanish and Italian versions in 1570. The English translator is doubtless more familiar to most English or American readers as the author of the version of Plutarch's lives used by Shakespeare. This literature of animal tales from the Orient has been translated into more languages than any other book except the Bible and is a striking illustration of how culture influences have passed from the Orient to the West. The Institute is now having photographed all the known oriental manuscripts, chiefly Arabic, in which these Tales of Kalila and Dimna, as they are called, have survived to us.

Parallel with this project in the field of literature the Institute is also at work in the realm of the history of natural science. The extraordinary ancient Egyptian surgical and medical treatise, now known as the Edwin Smith Papyrus, in the collections of the New York Historical Society, is really the earliest surviving scientific document known to us. Its content has proved to be an epoch-making revelation, and the Institute is preparing the translation and final scientific publication for the New York Historical Society. A fuller account of the plans and activities of the Institute and the scope of its work will be found in its first *Communication*[1] issued last year.

The researches and discoveries recorded in this volume were made possible solely by the generous support of the Oriental Institute by Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. The second volume of this series, entitled *The Annals of Sennacherib*, by Professor D. D. Luckenbill, is already on the press. It will contain all Sennacherib's records, including a full publication of the superb prism obtained by our expedition of 1919–20. It is an agreeable privilege to express here, on behalf of the members of the Institute, our sincere appreciation of the liberal contributions which have enabled us to begin this series of volumes as a tangible evidence of the debt of science to the founder of the Oriental Institute.

It is a matter of gratification to its members that the first volume of a series to be known as the Oriental Institute Publications[2] should contain these materials which so unequivocally illustrate the process of culture transition from the Orient to Europe. The recognition of this transition is daily revealing to modern men that there is no sharp cleavage between the Near Orient and Europe. The successive rise of both from prehistoric savagery has been *one* evolutionary process, the recovery of which will enable us to write the coherent and unified story of mankind. Writing these words, as I do, overlooking the hills of Tuscany but a few hours away from Ravenna, and contemplating the roofs and towers of Florence spread out below this historic villa where it is believed by many that Boccaccio found the scene of his immortal *Decamerone* tales, it seems peculiarly fitting that these prefatory words should be penned in the midst of surroundings which reveal at every turn how great a part in the revival of European culture was played by the men of Tuscany. For the art which developed so richly here in Florence, and especially the art of painting, was based to no small extent upon that of Byzantium, of which we must evidently recognize the ancestry in the wall paintings of Dura.

JAMES HENRY BREASTED

VILLA PALMIERI
FLORENCE, ITALY
June 1, 1923

[1] *Oriental Institute Communications No. 1* (to be abbreviated as *O.I.C. 1*). University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1922.

[2] This series may be referred to as *O.I.P.* I, etc.

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INTRODUCTION

By FRANZ CUMONT

The discovery of which Mr. Breasted gives an account in the following pages is one whose importance can hardly be exaggerated. It throws a vivid light upon numerous questions of which science still awaits the solution. It raises also new and perplexing questions, and it may be predicted that it will provoke abundant commentary. In these preliminary remarks, I would like simply to indicate briefly in what particulars it especially deserves our attention.

In the first place, this discovery is of great interest for our knowledge of the political history of ancient Syria. It furnishes us with authentic proof that the Romans established a military stronghold in a region which we have not heretofore known to have been permanently occupied by the legions. A massive fortress commanded the passage of the Euphrates at the point where the route from Palmyra crossed the river (see p. 26). This post was the most advanced of all those which are known along its banks. To what epoch must we carry back the establishment of a Roman garrison at Ṣâliḥîyah? It is certainly not to be dated before the conquests of Trajan. Before the reign of this emperor neither Palmyra nor Damascus nor Petra were subject to the imperial legates, and the desert of Syria was left outside the limits of their jurisdiction. But after the reduction of Mesopotamia to the condition of a province (114–16), Rome necessarily experienced the need of holding a strategic position which up to that time had been without value to her. The troops stationed there were able to assure the communications across the desert with the newly annexed territory, and to guard the transports descending the Euphrates against the enterprises of pillaging Arabs. Nevertheless, the occupation of Mesopotamia by Trajan was only ephemeral. Hadrian abandoned it immediately after the death of his predecessor and we do not know whether he constructed a fortress here, as he did elsewhere, for guarding the frontier and observing the hostile country on the other shore. It is therefore possible that the fortress of Ṣâliḥîyah is subsequent to the expedition of Lucius Verus against the Parthians (162–65), or even to that of Septimius Severus (197–99).[1] It was only then that a large portion of Mesopotamia became definitely Roman.

There is the same uncertainty as to the duration of the occupation. While awaiting new excavations we can do no more than suggest hypotheses as to the circumstances by which it was terminated. But we know that Dura was desert in the time

[1] This was written before the date of the paintings was established. Their date has important bearing on the date of the fortress. See pp. 88 and 64–65.—J. H. B.

of Constantine (p. 48). It is probable that it had been abandoned when Diocletian fixed the frontier of the Empire at the course of the Khâbûr and fortified Circesium at its mouth. It was at this time, one might suppose, that the legionaries evacuated their camp in the forsaken town.[1] None of the places mentioned in the *Notitia Dignitatum* (*Or.* xxxii) seems to be identifiable with Ṣâliḥîyah.

The paintings of Ṣâliḥîyah have even greater value for the history of religion than has the castle for political history. The scene (Plate VIII), in which one sees the family of Konon assisting at a double sacrifice offered by two Syrian priests, is unique in its kind and all its details will deserve to be studied. I confine myself here to a few rapid remarks.

The two celebrants are clad in white robes and wear conical caps of the same color. This headdress, which seems to be of Hittite origin, and the long robe gathered at the waist, appear like those of the king, Abd-Hadad, pictured sacrificing as far back as the fourth century before our era on the coins of Hierapolis, and Lucian informs us that in his time the priests of that city[2] were clad in a garment all of white, and that they wore on the head the πῖλος,[3] that is to say, a felt cap of conical shape. In a bas-relief from Ciliza on the north of Aleppo, the priest Gaios appears after the same fashion making an offering to the god Bel for himself and his family, exactly as at Ṣâliḥîyah.[4] The tall white cap has, furthermore, remained to the present day as part of the costume of the dervishes.

In the same way the nakedness of the feet, which distinguishes the two officiants from the mere assistants, reminds us of the Old Testament and of Islam. "Take the shoes from off thy feet, for the place where thou standest is holy ground," commands the voice which speaks to Moses from the burning bush,[5] and the interpreters of this verse see in it the origin of the obligation imposed on the priests, of fulfilling the ceremonies of the cult and of offering sacrifice with bare feet.[6] In reality the custom of removing the shoes before entering the temple is derived from the practice still common in the Orient, of removing them at the door of the house in order to avoid defiling the interior with mud and filth, and the Jewish proscription of shoes is likewise found in many cults of antiquity.[7] It is common knowledge that even today the Moslems still demand this mark of respect of all who cross the threshold of a mosque.

[1] This conjecture has been confirmed by Cumont's further excavations.—J. H. B.

[2] Babelon, *Monnaies de la Bibliothèque nationale. Perses Achéménides*, 1893, Plate LIII; Dussaud, *Notes de mythol. syrienne*, p. 97. Cf. my *Études syriennes*, 1917, p. 261.

[3] Lucian, *De Dea Syriae*, c. 42: Ἐσθὴς δὲ αὐτέοισι πᾶσα λευκὴ καὶ πῖλον ἐπὶ τῇ κεφαλῇ ἔχουσιν.

[4] *Études syriennes*, p. 257.

[5] Exod. 3:5; cf. Vigouroux, *Dict. de la Bible*, *s.v.* "Chaussures," p. 634.

[6] Theodoret, *Ad Ex. quaest.*, 7 (*Patrologia graeca*, LXXX, p. 231): Γυμνοῖς ἱερεῖς ποσὶ τὰς λειτουργίας ἐπετέλουν καὶ τὰς θυσίας.

[7] Notably in that of the Great Mother (Prudentius, *Peristeph.*, X, 154 ff.). Cf. Graillot, *Culte de Cybèle*, 1912, p. 139, n. 3. Some other examples are cited by Gruppe, *Griechische Mythologie*, p. 912.

We are reminded of still another ceremony of Judaism by the branch or palm carried in the left hand by the four men, while they raise the right hand as a sign of adoration.[1] It naturally suggests comparison with the *lulab*,[2] a bouquet composed of a palm and twigs of myrtle and willow carried by the Jews at the Feast of Tabernacles, which was an ancient agricultural feast of the vintage. At the present day the branches of myrtle and willow are still distributed to the assistants at the feasts of the Nosairis, and an analogous custom exists among the ᵓAhle Haqq of Kurdistan.[3]

The ceremony depicted on the wall of the chapel (Plate VIII) is exceedingly curious. At one side a priest who holds a ewer plunges a plant into a vase filled with water. This water is probably that of the Euphrates,[4] a sacred river already invoked in the ancient litanies at Babylon, whose waters were prescribed in preference to all others and were as holy as those of the Nile in Egypt. Beside this priest, a second makes an offering on an altar, whereon a fire is burning. We find here united the cults of the two opposed elements; for the adoration of the elements, and in particular that of water and fire, is characteristic of the religion of Mesopotamia in the Roman period as it was practiced by the "Chaldeans" or the Magi, and it is this worship which the polemic of the Christian apologists especially attacks.[5]

It is surprising to find this ceremony, wholly *oriental*—as is also the plan of the temple according to the remark of Mr. Breasted—close by the other, wholly *Roman*, of the tribune offering sacrifice to the emperors[6] before his legionaries and in the presence of the flag—a picture which calls up before our eyes with a vivacity singularly striking a scene from the life of the Roman military camps such as learned research enabled us to reconstruct in thought. How could these two cults fundamentally so different coexist in the same chapel?[7] The explanation which first suggests itself to one's mind is that the garrison of Ṣâliḥîyah was made up of legionaries and a *numerus*

[1] This gesture, of which Mr. Breasted has given the significance (p. 85), is found also in Syria, for example on one of the stelae of Nerab (at the Museum of the Louvre).

[2] Cf. *Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v.* "Lulab."

[3] Dussaud, *Les Nosaïres*, p. 89 ff.; Minorsky, *Notes sur la secte des ᵓAhlé-Haqq*, p. 93. Paris, 1922.

[4] On the cult of the Euphrates in the Roman epoch and the use of its waters, cf. *Études syriennes*, pp. 251 ff.

[5] Cf. my *Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra*, I, 105 (n. 1), 108. The mysteries of Mithra drew this cult of the elements from the religion of Babylonia.

[6] As M. Cumont in agreement with Clermont-Ganneau now holds, the statues depicted in the paintings are militarized Syrian gods and not emperors, a conclusion with which I agree.—J. H. B.

[7] This is true of an epoch well anterior to that of Odenathus and Zenobia. M. Réné Dussaud calls my attention to an inscription of Palmyra (*Répertoire d'épigr. sémit.*, I, 285) which is a dedication made in 132 by a Nabatean cavalryman in the camp of ᶜAnah. This camp is situated on the Euphrates, down-river from Dura, and was undoubtedly abandoned by the Romans along with the rest of Mesopotamia in 117. The Nabatean cavalryman must have been in the service of Palmyra, which was holding ᶜAnah on the caravan route.

Palmyrenorum, and that the former worshiped the deified Caesars according to Roman rite, and the latter according to Syrian rite. But the ceremony portrayed on the wall of Bithnanaia contains nothing of a military nature. The head of the family causes it to be celebrated in the presence of his descendants. His daughter and granddaughter assist in it, as do his sons and grandsons. It is a family sacrifice on the part of some powerful house, not an official sacrifice on the part of migratory soldiers in the service of the Empire. We are also led to suppose that the Romans took possession of a native sanctuary in existence prior to their arrival, and that they set up therein the cult of the Emperor by building there the isolated shrine which must have contained the statue of the prince and the standards of the garrison (pp. 70–71). But then we are not obliged to assign the same date to the two compositions, one of which adorns the first and the other the second room, and the Roman decoration of the latter would be later than that at the back of the chapel. If one might be allowed to hazard a guess in a question still buried in such obscurity, one would be tempted to assign the first painting to the epoch of the autonomy of Palmyra when her authority extended as far as the Euphrates. Konon must have been some chief of a tribe in subjection to the great city. The second painting would, on the contrary, date from the time when the Romans were occupying Ṣâliḥîyah and commanded the respect of the desert Arabs. We are thus again confronted by the question of chronology upon which we touched at the outset.[1]

In spite of all their historical and religious interest, the surprising works which Mr. Breasted has analyzed with such minute precision would seem above all of especial value for the history of art. Though we know Alexandrine painting relatively well, by means of the Pompeian frescoes, which sprang directly out of them, and though Egypt has furnished us by means of her mummies a considerable number of portraits, nevertheless up to the present time we have had only a very vague idea of what Graeco-Syrian painting might have been like. We are hardly able to study it in more than the decoration of a few tombs, of which the most remarkable is the one which Dr. Sobernheim has photographed at Palmyra.[2] The paintings recovered by M. Alois Musil in the castle of ʿAmra, in Arabia Petraea,[3] belong to the epoch of the Omayyad Caliphs, and they give us but a poor idea of what must have been those of antiquity. For the first time we find here at Dura large compositions enabling us to grasp the process employed by Graeco-Syrian artists in drawing and grouping their figures.

[1] The inscriptions since found by Cumont place the two paintings here discussed at two widely separated dates: the ceremony of Plate VIII in the first century, and that of the tribune in the early third century.—J. H. B.

[2] Last published in Djemal Pasha's collection, *Alte Denkmäler aus Syrien, Palästina und Westarabien*, Plate 68. Berlin, 1918. Cf. *Études syriennes*.

[3] Alois Musil, *Ḳuṣejr ʿAmra* (published by the Academy of Vienna), 1907. The Dominicans of Jerusalem will give us shortly some new reproductions of these curious paintings.

In the detail of their clothing and their ornaments, these figures display close relationships with those of the Palmyrene sculpture. Such a woman as the one whose image has been preserved on a sepulchral stone seems to be a twin sister of Bithnanaia, her head dressed with a similar embroidered toque, her person enveloped by the same veil and laden with the same jewelry (Pl. XXIII, 2).[1] But the paintings of Ṣâliḥîyah in the matter of technique are quite superior to the ordinary products of Palmyrene funereal sculpture. Once having cast one's eyes upon him, one will not soon forget the serious expression, the look of ecstasy of the sacrificing priest, and his bronzed face in which the ethnical characteristics are drawn with a touch so sure that one might be looking upon the portrait of some Beduin chieftain encountered in the bazaar at Damascus.

Mr. Breasted has already noted the resemblance of these pictorial works to the mosaics at Ravenna. Figures seen from the front, ranged in one line, their feet resting so insecurely on the ground as to give the impression of floating in the air, all these special points are common to certain Byzantine compositions and to our paintings. We may be certain that these documents of capital importance which have just been furnished to us will henceforth be constantly called upon whenever the complex question of the oriental origins of the art of the Middle Ages is under consideration.

One last question presents itself. Why was this sumptuous decoration executed in the modest chapel of a fort?

Should one believe that the custom of covering walls with frescos was, in Syria, so widespread that even in a house hidden away in the desert there was the desire to embellish its walls with such ornamentation? Or did some special reason here really justify an unwonted luxury? M. Clermont-Ganneau, who has offered us in the study of this enigmatical problem the benefit of his ever ingenious learning, has at this point advanced a suggestion which deserves being taken into serious consideration. Near Dura, which, as has been noted, is situated on the Euphrates opposite Ṣâliḥîyah, there was enacted a great historical drama. In 244 at this place the young emperor Gordian III was treacherously assassinated by an officer of his own army, a man whom the biographers of the Caesars call Philip the Arab. This artful Beduin caused divine honors to be rendered to his victim and his remains to be taken to Rome; but the soldiers, in memory of the leader whom they had just lost, set up a monumental cenotaph on the spot where he had perished. This tomb, "visible from afar," which must therefore have been placed upon an eminence, was situated between Zaitha and Dura, and was still in existence in the time of Julian, who, as he descended the left

[1] Unpublished bas-relief of the Louvre (A.O. 2198) of which M. Réné Dussaud has kindly had a photograph made for us. Compare Clermont-Ganneau, *Études d'archéologie orientale*, I, 112 ff. M. Gabriel Millet has pointed out to me another statue whose ornaments resemble those of our paintings, Marshall, *Catalogue of Jewellery*, p. 320.

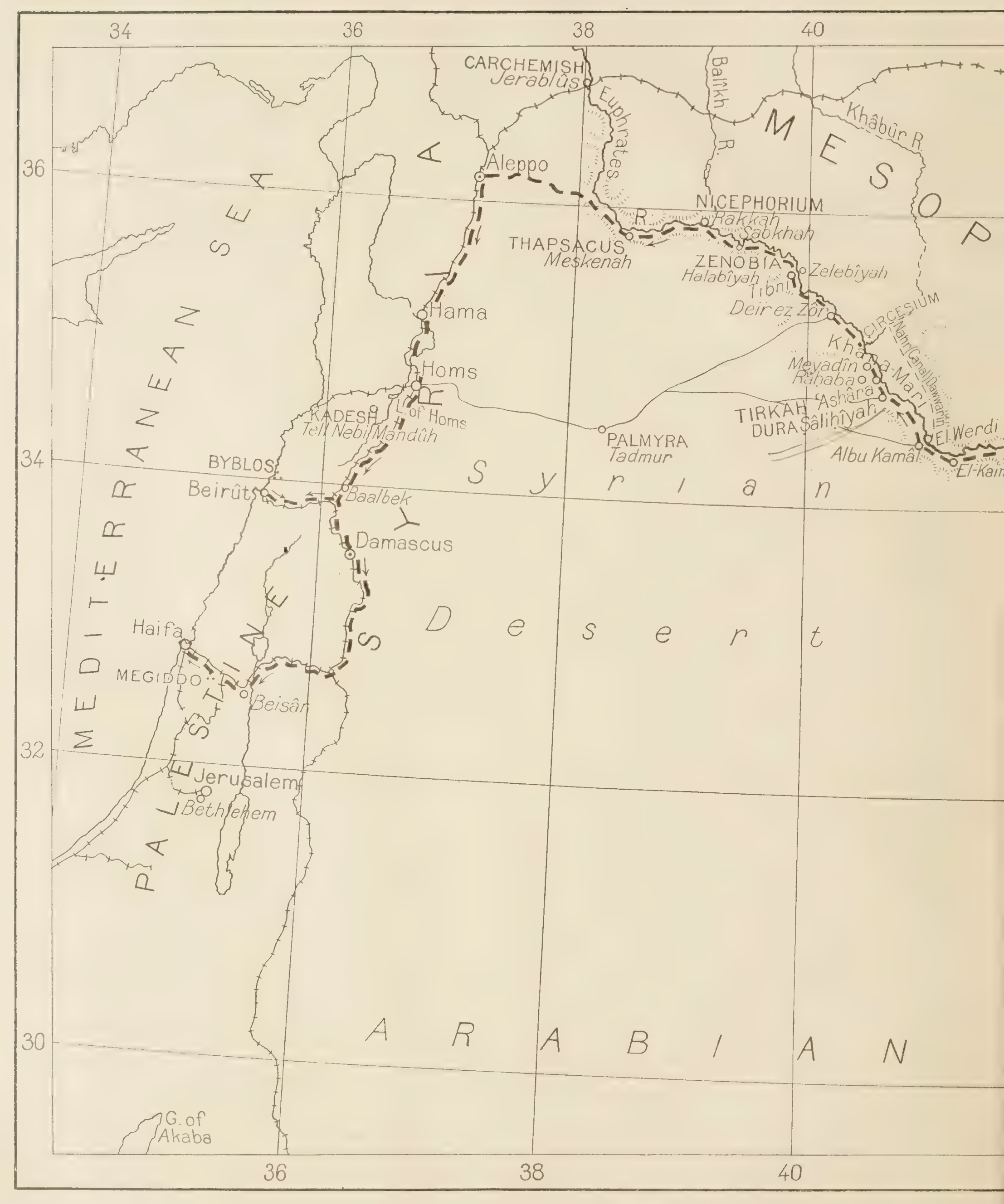
bank of the Euphrates, presented funeral offerings there.[1] May we concede that this sepulcher, where rites were practiced in behalf of the deceased emperor, was in reality situated on the other side of the river at Ṣâliḥîyah? Or at least, must one believe that a memorial of the tragic death which had occurred in the vicinity, in the territory which had once again become Persian, was celebrated in a sort of expiatory chapel in the Roman camp nearest at hand? Does the name *Kan-kaleh*, "House of Blood," which the fortress bears in Turkish, preserve an echo of the murder perpetrated in its neighborhood and recalled by the annual ceremonies within its walls? These are hypotheses which only further excavations can verify or disprove.

One needs must hope that the pacification of the country will permit of undertaking excavations which will bring to light all the paintings of this "House of Blood." Under the most unfavorable of circumstances Mr. Breasted, with his collaborators, has secured such an account as one would hardly have expected could be obtained in a single day, and we owe him warm appreciation for the revelations which he brings us. But the task now presents itself of completing his investigation and making known in its entirety the extraordinary monument which will henceforth make famous the name of Ṣâliḥîyah.[2]

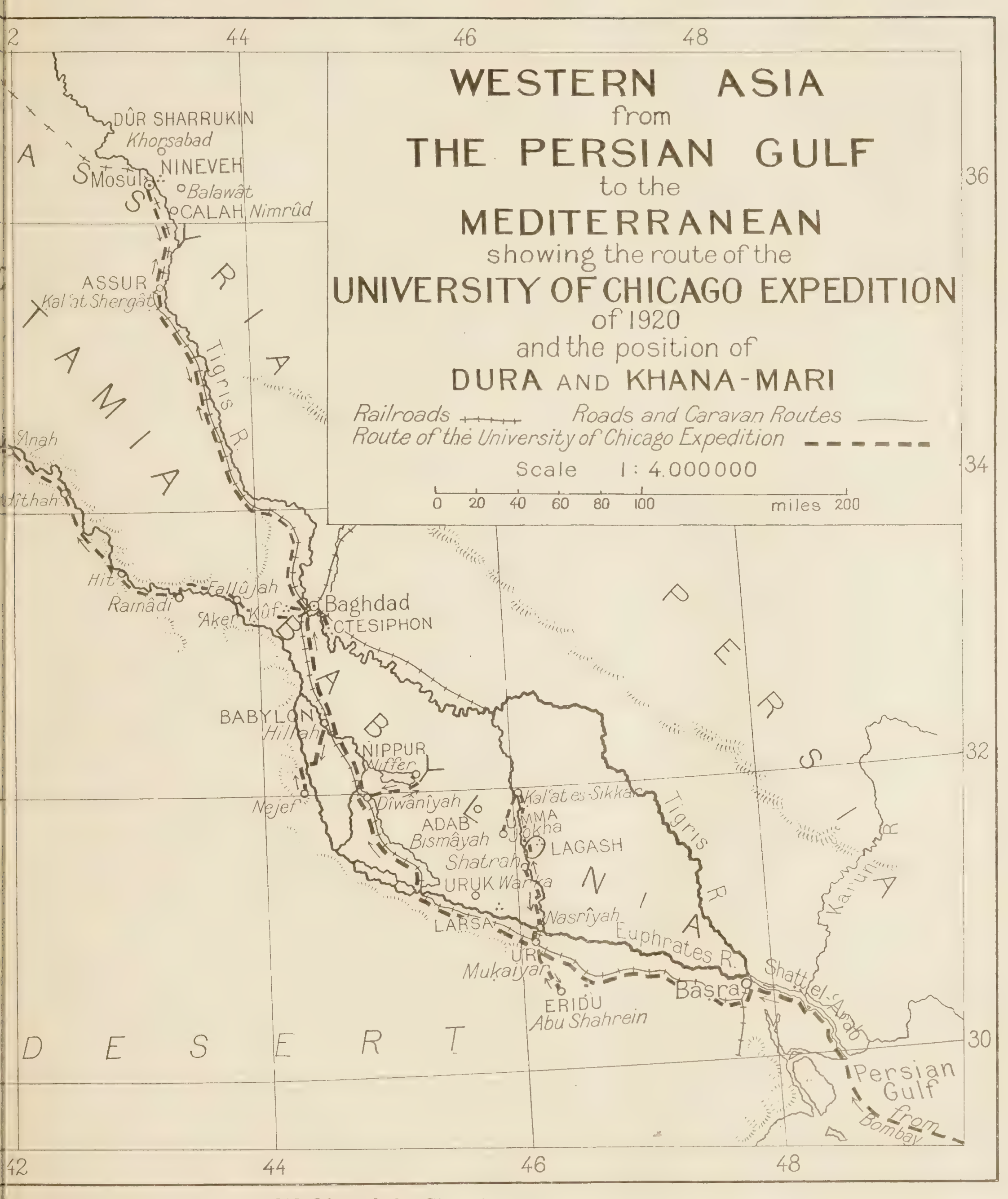
[1] The position of this tomb cannot be established with absolute certainty. Zosimus (iii. 14) states that it was at Dura; Ammianus (xxiii. 5. 7), that upon arrival at Zaitha one saw "Gordiani imperatoris longe conspicuum tumulum"; Eutropius (ix. 2. 3), on the contrary, the place to be "vigesimo milliario a Circesso"; but it is probable that he is giving the distance from the station at Zaitha, indicated in the itineraries, instead of that of the neighboring tomb. For other, still less precise references, cf. Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencycl.*, *s.v.* "Antonius," No. 60, col. 2627. [The inscriptions afterward excavated by Cumont have shown that Clermont-Ganneau's suggestion is not tenable.—J. H. B.]

[2] As above noted, M. Cumont has begun with the greatest success the continuation of the excavations which circumstances have not permitted the Oriental Institute to carry further.—J. H. B.

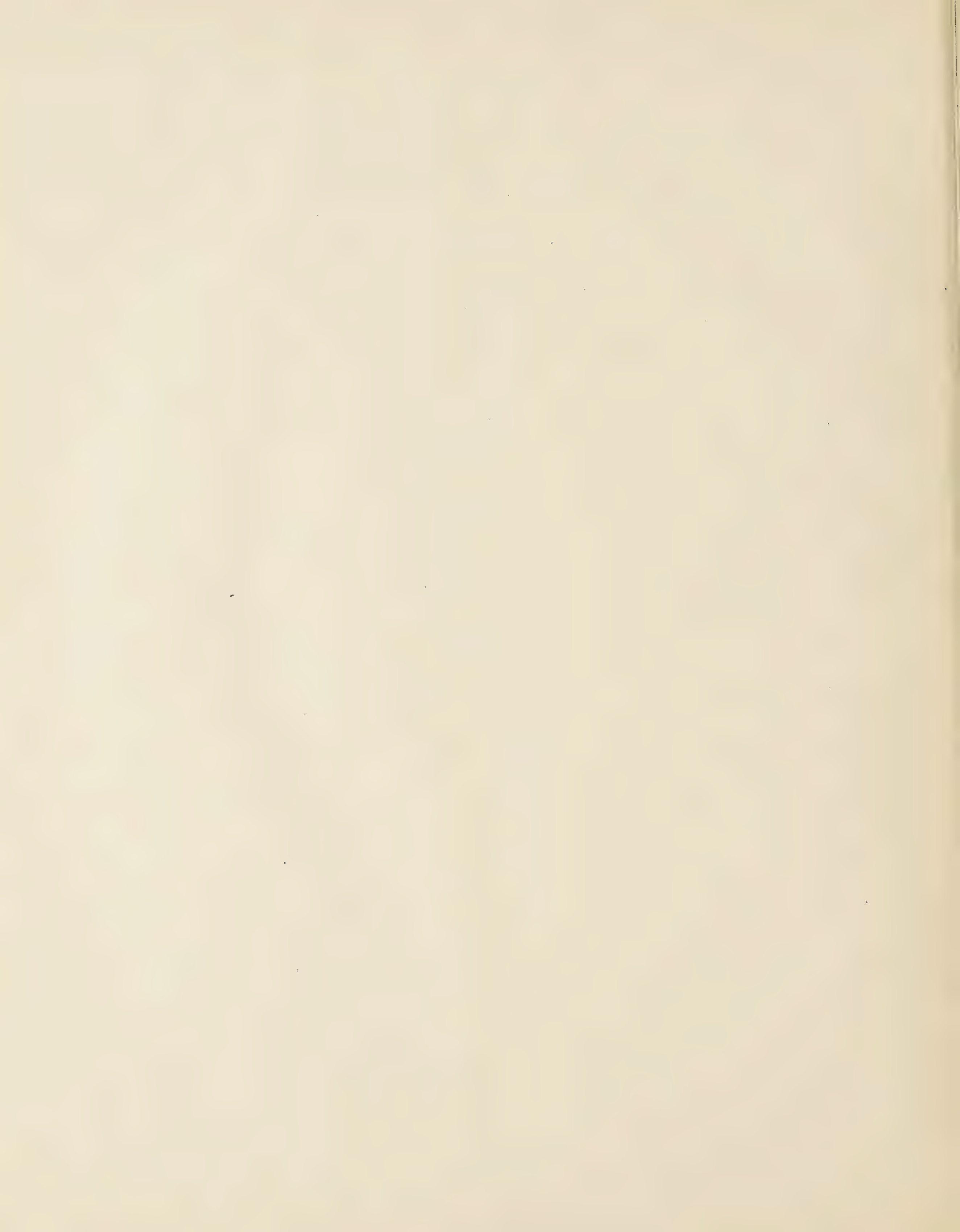




Map 1.—Western Asia, showing the route of the O
of Dura and the



tal Institute Expedition of 1919-20 and the Situation
in of Khana-Mari.



I

THE HISTORY OF DURA-ṢÂLIḤÎYAH AND THE MID-EUPHRATES KINGDOM OF KHANA-MARI

The northern extension of the Arabian Desert, which we commonly call the Syrian or the Syro-Mesopotamian Desert, reaches a latitude about that of the northern shores of the Mediterranean. This desert shoulder thus thrust northward separates the eastern shores and adjacent territory of the eastern Mediterranean (Syria-Palestine) on the one hand very completely from the world of the two rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates, on the other. This geographical barrier of the Syro-Mesopotamian Desert has always caused a political and cultural cleavage, though it has never been an impervious barrier, because cultural influences have been able to cross or go around its northern end, like the armies which were so often the expression of political power. In this desert region the Euphrates in its westernmost course approaches to a point about 100 miles from the northeast corner of the Mediterranean. Thence it turns southeastward toward the Persian Gulf. Its southward and southeastward course through the Syro-Mesopotamian and then through the Arabian Desert has been the path of many a western army leaving the Mediterranean world and endeavoring to reach that of Babylon and Nineveh, the region now popularly called Mesopotamia, which did not originally extend to the Persian Gulf or include the Babylonian plain. But such a march down the Euphrates across the desert was a difficult and dangerous enterprise. It is no accident that the successors of Alexander in Syria and Asia Minor early lost the Tigro-Euphrates world beyond the Syrian Desert; nor that the Roman Empire definitely relinquished this region and placed the eastern frontier at the Euphrates.

As a result of this strategic situation a stretch of some 250 to 300 miles of the course of the Euphrates, from a point below Carchemish-Jerablûs (near where the river is closest to the Mediterranean) down to the vicinity of ᶜAnah, formed a kind of intermediate fringe lying between the Mediterranean world on the west and that of the two rivers, or Mesopotamia and Babylonia, on the east. This stretch of Euphrates, therefore, was sometimes held by Babylonia, Assyria, Persia, or Parthia as a *western* frontier, and again by a western power like that of the Macedonians or Romans as its *eastern* frontier. Its alternating political connection is suggestive also of the commingling of cultural elements in this region, which in its civilization clearly betrayed influences received from both East and West. The composite civilization which thus grew up along this stretch of Euphrates, like the political history of the region, is little known; and the discoveries resulting from the work of the University

of Chicago Expedition and the mission of M. Franz Cumont have demonstrated the fundamental importance of exploration and excavation among the ruins which still survive there.

The plateau of the Syro-Mesopotamian Desert has many points of resemblance to the Sahara Desert plateau of Northern and Northeastern Africa, of which indeed the great deserts of Western Asia are the geological continuation on the Asiatic side of the Red and Mediterranean seas. Entering the Syro-Mesopotamian Desert from the north, as we have noted, at about the latitude of Aleppo, the Euphrates has never succeeded in eroding a valley of continuous breadth. It is in some stretches a narrow defile or canyon; again the valley expands to a width of some miles. Throughout



FIG. 1.—TYPICAL VIEW OF EUPHRATES VALLEY IMMEDIATELY ABOVE ᶜANAH

Plateau cliffs dropping to the water on opposite (Mesopotamian) side; narrow cultivated strip between river and cliffs on near side.

all the desert course of the Euphrates, however, its valley never widens so as to create an alluvial floor of cultivable soil sufficiently extensive to furnish the agricultural basis for sustaining a large population, as in Egypt above the Nile delta; or for a corresponding development of culture and of stable political power. For stretches of many miles the cliffs drop almost to the water's edge, and in such places there is absolutely no population at all. Of the region between ᶜAnah (Fig. 10) and El-Ḳaim (Fig. 12) the engineer Černik, who passed through it in 1872, says: "Es ist soviel als gar nicht bewohnt."[1] We made the same observation on our journey through this district in 1920. The series of Euphrates views distributed through this discussion will serve to demonstrate this character of the Euphrates Valley better than an elaborate geographical description. After three typical glimpses of the Euphrates

[1] Černik, *Technische Studien-Expedition durch die Gebiete des Euphrat und Tigris.* Ergänzungsheft No. 44 zu *Petermann's Mittheilungen,* 1875.

(Figs. 1–3), the views begin at Hit (Fig. 4), where the alluvial plain of the lower Euphrates practically ends as you ascend the river, and moving upstream they show a series of characteristic points as far upriver as Meskenah (Fig. 16), where the road from Baghdad to Aleppo leaves the Euphrates.

Omitting smaller and less important areas of cultivation, where there is a very limited expansion of the valley floor, there are two chief regions where the alluvial plain is of such proportions as to permit a cultural development of some importance. These are the district of ᶜAnah about 180 miles above Baghdad, and the plain below Deir ez-Zôr, some 320 miles from Baghdad, that is about midway between this city and the Mediterranean. We are dealing in this book with the latter of these two



Fig. 2.—Typical Wall of the Desert Plateau along the Euphrates
Arid floor of the Euphrates Valley and a part of our caravan in foreground

districts, the plain below Deir ez-Zôr, the modern metropolis of the middle Euphrates region. We shall hereafter refer to this town as Deir. With some interruptions from intrusive promontories of the plateau, this plain extends for about 75 to 80 miles southeastward of Deir. In width it varies from nothing at all to a maximum of some 35 kilometers, about 22 miles; but by no means all of this maximum width is cultivable alluvium. Around Meyadîn the grassy plain extends at one place some 25 miles westward and furnishes grazing in spring for the flocks, herds, and mares of the Anazah Arabs; but the cultivation never extended so far. Somewhat over 10 miles below Deir the plateau thrusts forward to the river for several miles on the west side

opposite the mouth of the Khâbûr, while on the east the Mesopotamian Desert sends out the tip of a tongue of mountains in a long promontory which completely fills the interval between the parallel channels of the Euphrates and its tributary the Khâbûr coming in from the north and east. The heights on each side of the Euphrates here form a narrow defile, and it was this strategically strong gateway which the Romans selected as the most easily defended frontier barrier of the Empire on the east. Here, therefore, on the east side of the Euphrates, at the tip of the above-mentioned narrow promontory, between the Euphrates and the Khâbûr, Diocletian built the frontier



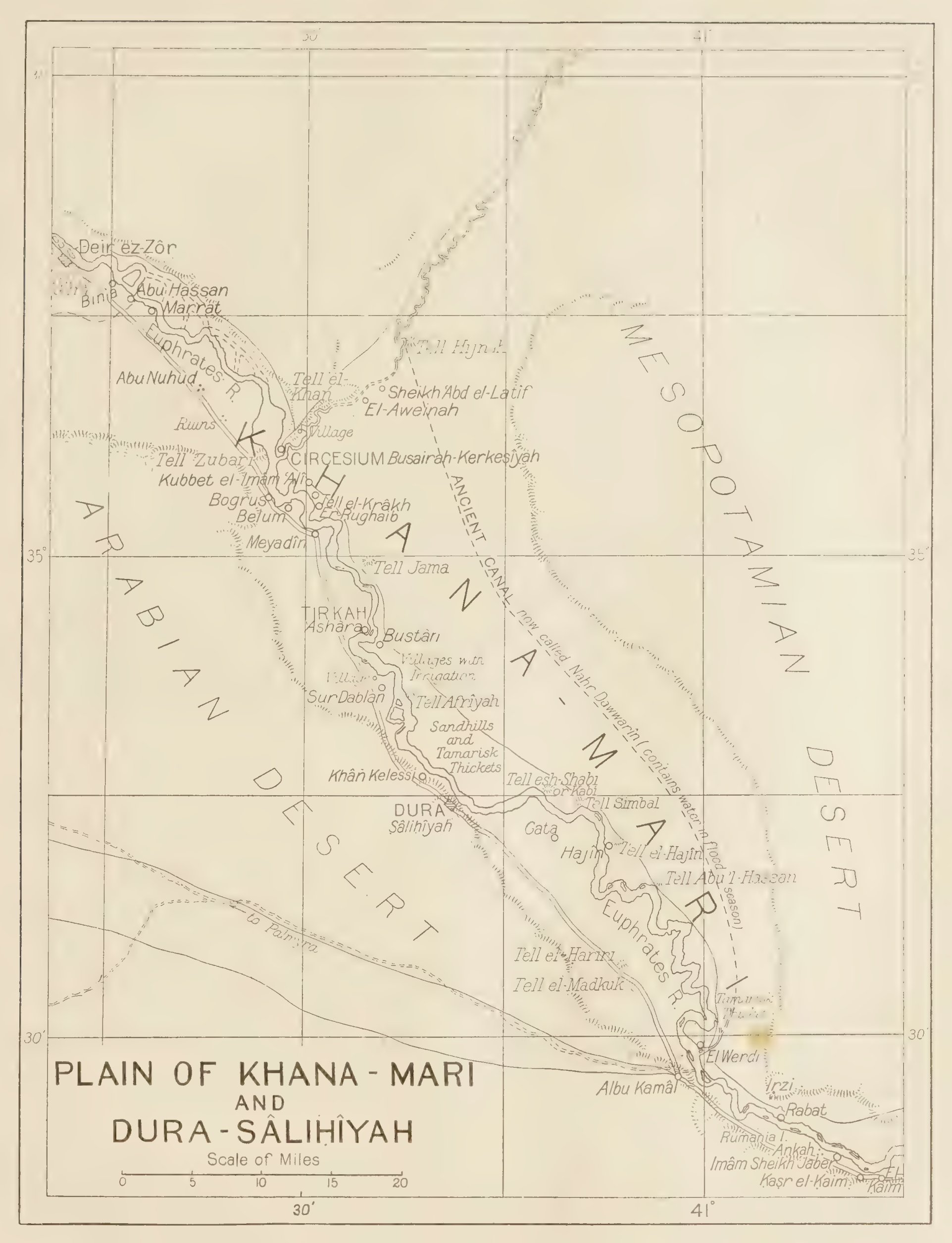
FIG. 3.—TYPICAL DESERT VALLEY "WADI" ON RIGHT BANK OF EUPHRATES BELOW DEIR EZ-ZÔR

Part of our caravan climbing to the top of the plateau because the desert cliffs left no room for passing along the river bank below.

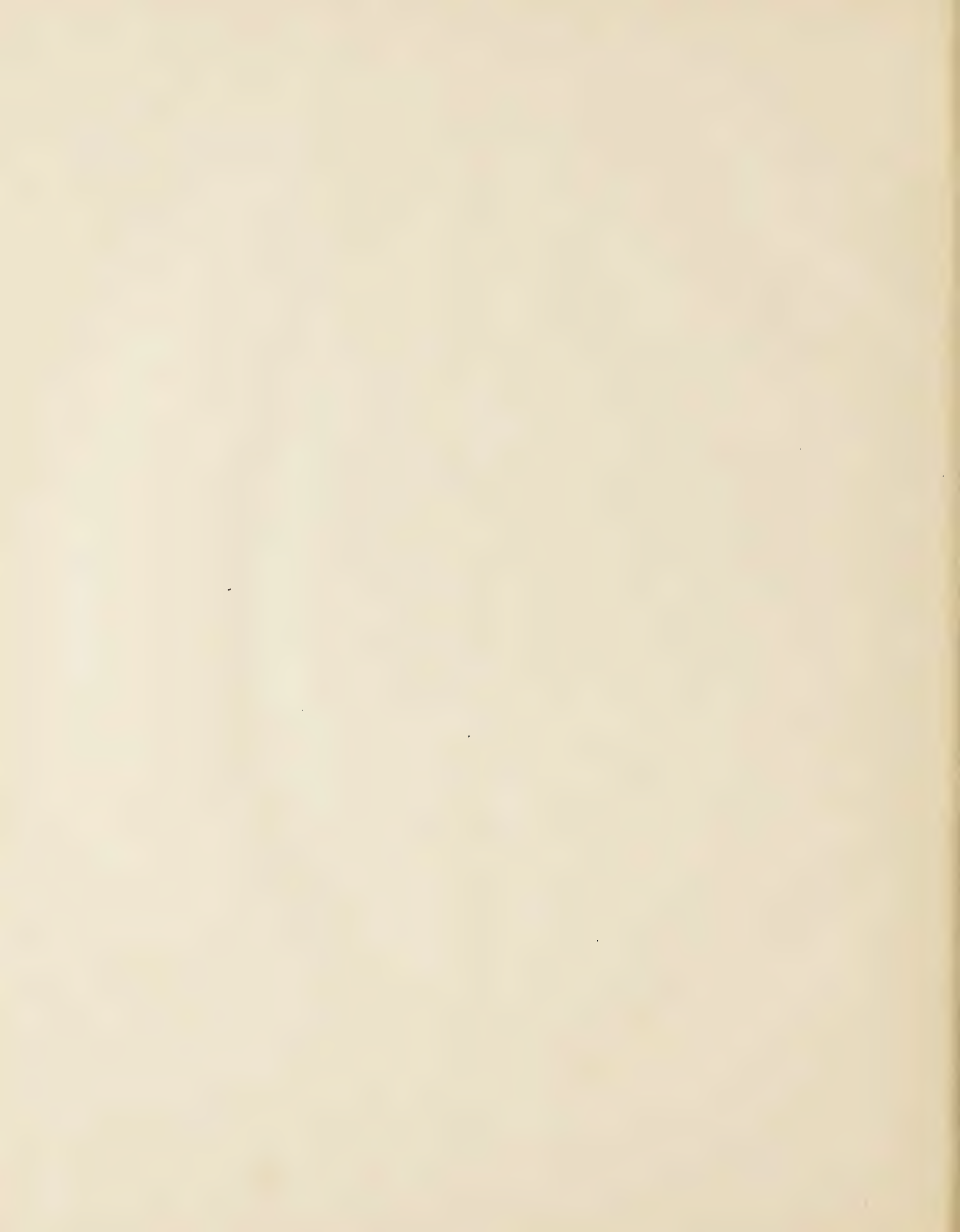
fortress of Circesium toward the end of the third century of our era. This narrow defile at Circesium cuts off the northern district of the plain for some 10 miles below Deir, and the intrusive plateau cliffs occupy several miles more. The remainder of the plain stretches southward from the defile at Circesium on the north in a coherent whole along the river for something like 55 to 60 miles to modern Albu Kamâl on the south.[1]

This plain from below the Circesium defile, that is, from the mouth of the Khâbûr, to Albu Kamâl, never in Graeco-Roman days received any name which has descended

[1] Exact measurements along the windings of the river are not available. The measurements given follow the general trend of the plain.



Map 2.—The Plain of Khana-Mari



to us; nor have the Moslems ever given it a designation, political or geographical, which has become current. It is difficult, therefore, to refer to it in terms intelligible to the reader, for modern historians have likewise failed to give it a name. Indeed, enveloped as this region is in the heart of the Syro-Mesopotamian Desert, few historians are acquainted with it, and fewer still have ever seen it. For reasons which will be evident as we proceed, we shall call this plain "*Khana-Mari*," a term compounded of two names which were evidently the earliest to be applied to the region or to parts of it, in so far as we know.

The river wanders for the most part along the western edge of the river "bottoms," so that the plain of Khana-Mari lies chiefly on the east side of the Euphrates (Fig. 17). This leaves its eastern portion far from the river, and at an early date advantage was taken of the fact that the northern boundary of the plain is the Khâbûr. From this



FIG. 4.—MODERN HIT, THE CLASSICAL IS, THE ANCIENT SOURCE OF BITUMEN

tributary an irrigation canal was dug along the eastern boundary of the plain to the Euphrates at El-Werdi (see Map 2), where the Mesopotamian plateau advances to the river in a lofty promontory to form the southern boundary of the plain.[1] The plain falls into two districts, the result of a natural division caused by the advance of the western plateau to the river, not far south of the middle of the plain. This salience of the western desert pushes forward directly to the margin of the river for nearly 14 miles, and for some 9 miles the rock walls of the plateau escarpment fall sheer almost to the water's edge. On the west side of the Euphrates, therefore, the plain is completely cut in two; on the east side there is no such division. This intrusion of the

[1] See Gertrude L. Bell, *From Amurath to Amurath*, pp. 78 and 82; Sarre-Herzfeld, *Archäologische Reise im Euphrat- und Tigris-Gebiet*, II, 387. While we are not able to date the origin of this canal with precision, the early history of the plain would indicate that it was in existence before the Moslem Age and probably in old Assyrian and Babylonian days.

plateau on the west side reduces essentially the cultivable area of the plain, but in its maximum length of 60 miles it may have included at times as much as 400 square miles of cultivated fields—an area equal to a good-sized American county.

With relation to the larger world of the Near East as a whole, Khana-Mari occupied a favorable strategic position, in spite of its situation in the heart of a desert, separated on all sides by hundreds of miles of waterless waste from the nearest communities of men (see Map 1). It was a veritable island in the sandy ocean. One line of connection, however, was the river itself, which furnished a highway to Babylonia on the southeast and to Asia Minor and Armenia on the northwest and north—not a navigable highway to be sure, but at least a desert road amply supplied with water. Westward stretched over 200 miles of desert to the valley of the Orontes and the



Fig. 5.—The Bitumen Basin at Hit

Mediterranean kingdoms. On this western desert road nine or ten days' journey distant (140 miles) lay the oasis of Tadmur, more familiar to us as Palmyra, which supported a caravan road between the Mediterranean kingdoms and the middle Euphrates region. On the east was the Mesopotamian Desert with a caravan route leading to Nineveh and the upper Tigris region. Khana-Mari lay thus like an island haven on the desert line of communication between Persia, Babylonia, and Assyria on the east, and Asia Minor, Egypt, and the Mediterranean world on the west. It is evident that in such a situation a sufficient population, maintaining themselves on an agricultural basis, would find sustenance here to develop a kingdom powerful enough to seek more than merely agricultural prosperity and to control the traffic up and down the river as well as the caravans of merchandise passing east and west through the deserts on each side.

Today little of this ancient prosperity survives, as we shall see. The irrigation canal is clogged and has fallen into disuse. It contains water for a time in some places

after the season of flood. In the north, around Deir, skin buckets operated by animals raise the water to irrigate the fields. In the south, beyond the limits of Khana-Mari, and especially above ʿAnah,[1] huge water wheels driven by the current of the river serve the same purpose much more efficiently. In Khana-Mari itself, however, cultivation is at present limited to the region immediately around the towns, and of these there are very few. There are some mounds marking the ruins of ancient cities, though they are far from being as numerous as in the region around Aleppo or on the Babylonian plain. Even our hurried journey through the country made it evident that no great and powerful nation *native to this region* and rooted in its soil ever gave



Fig. 6.—A Bitumen Well at Hit
Hot water bubbles up through the liquid bitumen

impressive expression to its power in imposing buildings and massive strongholds. Such structures now surviving in Khana-Mari were the work of great empires intruding from without. Such is the stronghold of Circesium which the Roman Empire erected at the northern end of the plain, fixing the imperial frontier securely in a region of copious water, plentiful provender for a garrison, and strong natural defenses, although surrounded by vast reaches of desert fatal to an army once involved in them. It was an outpost like an island or a bridge pier which the Romans held secure but failed to advance permanently to the other shore. In the same way Alexander's successors made use of the place and continued to hold it. Just as under Greeks and Romans

[1] The water wheels begin a few miles below El-Ḳaim and extend to Hit.

it was a safe frontier outpost of the West against the East, so it had earlier been a similar stronghold of the East against the West, and a number of important battles in the age-long struggle of East and West were fought on the plain of Khana-Mari. Until recently, however, we have not been able to trace the history of the region farther back than the Seleucid occupation, nor even as far as this without serious gaps.

Concerning the period preceding Alexander's successors little was known of Khana-Mari until the last years of the past century, when cuneiform documents containing references to the lands of *Ḫana* (Khana) and *Mari* began to appear. Some references to Mari had been observed in documents previously known,[1] but its situation had at first been wholly problematical.

At length indications were noted in the cuneiform documents that Mari was situated along the middle Euphrates near the steppe called *Suḫi* (Sukhi).[2] The first

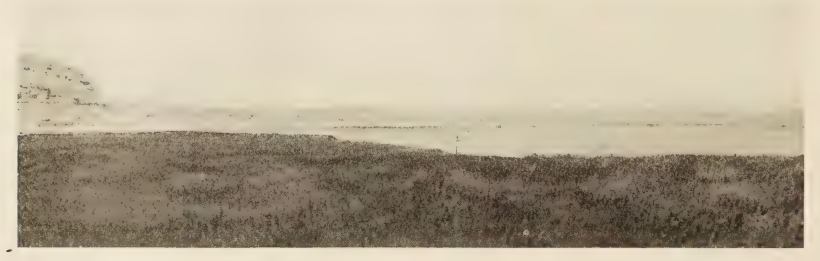


Fig. 7.—Looking up the Euphrates at Ḥadîthah

The narrow strip of vegetation stops in the immediate background where the cliffs of the plateau may be seen descending to the river on both shores.

document mentioning the land of Khana was published in 1897.[3] It was a cuneiform tablet containing a deed of gift of a house situated "near the palace" in the city of *Tirḳa*, and it bore the seal of Išar-lim, king of Khana. For ten years this remained the sole document from Khana known to us. Then in 1907 Johns published a marriage contract[4] from Khana, which showed that this country was situated in Mesopotamia in the region of the river Khâbûr. At about the same time there appeared a tablet which came from a temple erected in Tirḳa by Shamshi-Adad, an Assyrian patesi

[1] Thureau-Dangin, *Die sumerischen and akkadischen Königsinschriften*, 1907, pp. 22–23, 170–71. Compare also King, *History of Sumer and Akkad*, plate opp. p. 102, and p. 98; Ed. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, I, 2³ (1913), §386.

[2] Weissbach, *Babylonische Miszellen*, pp. 9 ff.; and Herzfeld, *Revue d'Assyriologie*, XI (1914), 137.

[3] Thureau-Dangin, *Revue d'Assyriologie*, IV, 3. livr. (1897), pl. XXXII, no. 85; and *Orientalistische Litteratur-Zeitung*, XI (1908), col. 93 (note 1).

[4] C. H. W. Johns, *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, XXIX (May, 1907), 180; cf. Ungnad, *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, XXII (1909), 9.

who ruled about 1900 B.C.[1] The evidence for its provenience indicated that the tablet was found at Tell ᶜAshâra in the plain below the defile of Circesium. Shortly after this a tablet purchased near Deir el-Fâr in the same plain near the great ruin of Râḥaba proved to be a gift by "King Ammi-Bail" of land situated partially in the city of Tirḳa.[2] In 1909 another of these documents from Khana was published by Thureau-Dangin, who had first observed and identified the references to it. The new tablet[3] recorded a contract concerning a sale of land in the territory of Tirḳa under a king called Kashtiliashu. Summarizing the evidence of content, handwriting, etc., Thureau-Dangin concludes that all these documents from Khana came from the same body of archives.[4]

Finally this rapidly appearing series of documents regarding the kingdoms of Khana and Mari culminated just before the Great War in a report by Herzfeld of his



FIG. 8.—SCANTY FIELDS ALONG THE EUPHRATES TWO MILES ABOVE ḤADÎTHAH

The water wheel of Fig. 9 in the background

discovery that the tiny Arab village called ᶜAshâra in the plain of Khana-Mari, 15 kilometers south of Meyadîn, was built on a mound of ancient ruins dating far back of Graeco-Roman antiquity. He acquired here from the natives ancient Babylonian sculptures of very early date reaching far back in the third millennium B.C. The side of the mound out of which these pieces undoubtedly came has been cut away by the action of the Euphrates current, and in this vertical section exposed by the river Herzfeld himself dug out of the ancient rubbish a tablet dating from the First Dynasty of Babylon and recording the fact that a king of Mari named Zim[ri] had

[1] P. Condamin, *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie,* XXI (1908), 247; and important discussion by Thureau-Dangin, *Orientalistische Litteratur-Zeitung,* XI (1908), col. 193.

[2] Ungnad, "Urkunden aus Dilbat," *Beiträge zur Assyriologie,* VI (1909), No. 5, 26 ff.; *Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler ....zu Berlin,* VII, no. 82; and Herzfeld, *op. cit.,* p. 138.

[3] Thureau-Dangin, *Journal Asiatique, 10ᵉ Série,* XIV (1909), 149–55.

[4] Thureau-Dangin, *ibid.,* p. 155.

erected a building in Tirḳa.[1] It was then evident that the ruins of Tirḳa were buried under the mound of Tell ᶜAshâra, and that the little Arab village on the mound was built on the ruins of the capital of Khana, for such Tirḳa must have been. That the king of Mari should have been erecting a building in the capital of Khana would suggest that he had conquered Khana and was ruling it. The position of Tirḳa in the midst of the plain around modern Meyadîn shows clearly that the kingdom of Khana included at least that plain stretching toward Deir ez-Zôr, however much more it may have comprised.

Shortly after this Clay[2] discussed the occurrence of the name of Mari in various forms and suggested that the middle Euphrates town of Merra or Merrha, included



Fig. 9.—Irrigation Water Wheel in the Euphrates at Ḥadîthah

Compare Fig. 8. The current turns the wheel and raises the submerged and filled buckets or jars to be emptied into the aqueduct leading to the field on the left. These wheels begin a few miles below El-Ḳaim (Fig. 12) and extend to Hit.

by Isidor of Charax in his lists, should be identified with Mari of the cuneiform documents. This equation of Mari with Merrha is not at all unlikely; though Merrha has commonly been placed at Irzi, on the left bank of the Euphrates surmounting the salience of the plateau which terminates the plain of Khana-Mari on the south. But it is probable that the town of Mari will be found nearer to Dura, for Isidor makes Dura his nineteenth station and Merrha his twentieth. The interval which he gives between Dura and Merrha is 5 *schoinoi.* I have never marched it myself, but, measured with no allowance for tortuous terrain, the interval on the British

[1] Herzfeld, *op. cit.*, pp. 131–39.

[2] Clay, *Yale Oriental Series. Babylonian Texts,* Vol. I, p. 4. New Haven, 1915.

War Office map from Ṣâliḥîyah to Irzi is over 35 miles, a distance considerably exceeding 5 *schoinoi* as used by Isidor. Merrha is therefore much more likely to have lain somewhere within the Khana-Mari plain—a situation which would make its identification with Mari much more probable. Thus our identification of Ṣâliḥîyah as ancient Dura enhances the value of the identification of Isidor's Merrha with Mari, for it places Mari in accordance with Isidor's arrangement of his stations 5 *schoinoi* from a known point, and connects it with the plain where the discovery of Tirḳa has shown it must belong.



Fig. 10.—The Valley of the Euphrates at ᶜAnah

We look downstream from the north end of the ᶜAnah district. Although several miles long, the cultivated strip at ᶜAnah is so narrow that the whole of it would not exceed the area of a good-sized farm in the Mississippi Valley.

We are now in a position to discern something of the course of history on the Middle Euphrates from a very early date. The little kingdom of Mari was already subject to the Babylonians as far back as the supremacy of Lagash around 3000 B.C., when Eannatum, the king of Lagash, was overlord of Mari and there was intimate intercourse between the kings of Mari and those of Babylonia. A king of "Ma'er or Mari" in this same early epoch seems to have offered to Shamash of Babylonia an archaic seated statue now in the British Museum.[1] In these early days when ephemeral political leadership was shifting frequently from one Babylonian city to another, even the little kingdom of Mari might aspire to such supremacy. The early dynastic

[1] Herzfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 137; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 97–98, and plate opp. p. 102, right-hand figure; Thureau-Dangin, *Die sumerischen und akkadischen Königsinschriften*, 1907, 170–71.

lists preserved a tradition from an age so early as to be half mythic,[1] that Mari gained the leadership of Babylonia and maintained it for at least a generation through the reigns of several kings.[2] We can only conclude that the presumably Semitic chieftain of Mari was a military leader of ability who was able to march his desert troops down the Euphrates and conquer the alluvial plain below, just as the ancestors of Hammurabi, many centuries later, were able to do. The overthrow of Mari after its leadership had weakened seems to have made an impression, at the time of its occurrence, as an event of sufficient importance to furnish the current and official form of the year name used in dating: "year when Ma'er (Mari) was destroyed."[3]



FIG. 11.—ISLAND CULTIVATION IN THE EUPHRATES AT ʿANAH

The walls of the desert plateau are seen descending to the river on the other (left) bank, as in Fig. 10.

With the rise of the powerful Sargon I, his dominion extended up the Euphrates for a time into Syria, even to the silver-bearing mountains of Cilicia, and his records affirm that he held "the upperland, Mari, Yarmuti and Ibla."[4] Mari seems to be

[1] Delaporte, *La Mesopotamie*, p. 65, places the dynasty of Mari in "*Chronologie mythique*" (in *L'Évolution de l'Humanité*, Vol. VIII, Paris, 1923).

[2] L. Legrain, *Historical Fragments*, pp. 18–24 (in "University of Pennsylvania, The University Museum, Publications of the Babylonian Section," Vol. XIII); again, *Museum Journal* (December, 1920). See also Gadd, *The Early Dynasties of Sumer and Akkad*, pp. 8–12.

[3] Legrain, *ibid.*, pp. 62–63.

[4] Poebel, *Historical Texts*, pp. 177–78 (in "University of Pennsylvania, The University Museum, Publications of the Babylonian Section," Vol. IV, No. 1). My colleague Professor Luckenbill calls my attention to the fact that Sargon's possession of Mari is confirmed by an Assyrian copy of Sargon I's records made under Sargon II of Assyria. See Schroeder, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur verschiedenen Inhalts*, Text No. 92. It places Mari on the Euphrates. See also Poebel, *op. cit.*, pp. 222 ff.

used here vaguely both for the middle Euphrates region and for territory which it controlled for an uncertain distance up the Euphrates. It is evident that Mari has been absorbed in the northwestern expansion of Babylonia as it pushed up the Euphrates into Syria.

Very much later, under the Ur Dynasty, there was a governor of Mari named Izi-Dagan, as we learn from his seal. Not long afterward, about the middle of the twenty-fourth century B.C., we find a man of Mari, probably a hardy military adventurer, who went down the river to the Babylonian plain and made a successful career at Isin, where he was strong enough to establish a dynasty. His name was Ishbi-Irra and he was the first king of the well-known Dynasty of Isin.[1]



Fig. 12.—Tamarisk Thickets along the Euphrates at El-Ḳaim
Such tracts furnish only food for camels, seen feeding in this view

During the career of Isin arose the First Dynasty of Babylon, the famous line of Hammurabi, a family which also pushed down the Euphrates from the west and established its fortunes in the Babylonian plain. It is evident that these upriver Semites like Ishbi-Irra and the ancestors of Hammurabi were aggressive and energetic men of action. Their drift down the Euphrates and their easily won supremacy in the alluvial lowland were not unlike the barbarian intrusions into the later Roman Empire, whose advent brought in new blood and efficient leadership. There are indications that the same type of Semitic chieftains also pushed into Egypt more than once. What they brought with them was chiefly aggressive leadership, for there is no evidence that the regions from which they came possessed anything but the crudest stages of incipient civilization in the period preceding 2000 B.C., the period with which we are dealing. Like the barbarous Persian shepherds of Cyrus'

[1] Poebel, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

time, they had to learn civilization in the more advanced communities whose territories they invaded. But the unlettered Persians, who could not write and *did not even possess a system of writing* when they first advanced against the civilized world of the Ancient Orient, produced Cyrus and Darius, two of the greatest organizers that ever lived. In the same way these upriver Semites of Mari and the region above it brought forth the founders of dynasties and such able rulers as Hammurabi.[1]

Poebel has suggested that Mari was the political center of the middle Euphrates region in the days when Hammurabi himself attacked it[2] and destroyed its wall. We should expect a sagacious ruler like Hammurabi to push up the Euphrates and prevent further invasions of Babylonia from this quarter, such as his fathers had long been carrying on. When he edited his code he seems still to have held the Khana-Mari region. After Hammurabi's successors failed to hold his dominions together and lower Babylonia fell away, it is probable that Mari likewise escaped from the control of the Babylonian dynasty for a time, and thereupon we lose sight of it for long centuries.

In the foregoing rapid survey we see that the ancient documents afford us glimpses of the situation on the middle Euphrates for some nine centuries after 3000 B.C. After the beginning of the twenty-first century B.C., it is nearly a thousand years before we gain another glimpse of the plain of Khana-Mari. In the long interval the civilization of Babylonia had declined as a result of foreign invasion, and her political fortunes had likewise suffered eclipse. The expansion of Assyria had meantime carried her armies westward to the Euphrates, where Khana-Mari did not escape the growing power of the mighty kingdom on the Tigris. From the new documents discovered in the excavation of the old Assyrian capital at Assur, whence the kingdom took its name, we learn that in the thirteenth century B.C. King Tukulti-Inurta I traversed and captured "Mari, Khana, Rapiḳu, and the mountains of Akhlami. . . . . "[3] The

[1] It is a curious perversion and misunderstanding of existent evidence which would find in the region whence these able leaders came, the original source of civilization—a region which excavation has shown was far inferior in civilization to both Babylonia and Egypt in the period preceding 2000 B.C., and indeed for long after this date. Moreover, a large part of the region is arid desert, furnishing no economic basis for the development of civilization. The theories of an "Amorite Empire" have been formulated in complete misunderstanding of the elementary facts in the economic geography of the country. For example, we are told that "the northern part of this territory, known as Syria and Mesopotamia, is fertile" (A. T. Clay, *The Empire of the Amorites*, p. 50. Yale University Press, 1919). The actual facts are that, with the exception of the lower part of the valleys of the Balîkh and the Khâbûr, Mesopotamia is a desert, or waterless steppe, and much of Syria likewise; for the desert extends from Mesopotamia westward beyond the Euphrates into Syria including the hills overlooking Ḥomṣ in the Orontes Valley; while eastward it even invades the east side of the Tigris. Needless to say that civilizations do not arise nor empires develop in deserts.

[2] Poebel, *op. cit.*, p. 223, year name of Hammurabi's fourth year.

[3] Schroeder, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur historischen Inhalts, 2tes Heft* ("Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft," 37, Leipzig, 1922), Text No. 60, ll. 69 ff. I am indebted to my colleague Professor Luckenbill for this reference. The list of the king's foreign conquests following the foregoing regions includes thirty-four geographical names and among them appears the "land Duri," which can hardly be our Dura.



Fig. 13.—The Euphrates at Tibni

The view is eastward, showing the scanty vegetation of the arid steppe



Fig. 14.—The Euphrates Valley at Ḥalabîyah

For over 5 miles above this point there is no cultivation along the river. The succession of views here omits the Deir ez-Zôr plain and its region, which will be found in Figs. 17–24. Photograph from Sarre-Herzfeld, Pl. LXXII.

list seems to be proceeding from east to west, that is, up the Euphrates, and thus places Mari below Khana, in accordance with the position of Isidor's Merrha below Dura which we have discussed above. In so far as we know, this was the first appearance of the Assyrians in Khana-Mari, and Assyrian power was therefore first felt here in the thirteenth century B.C.

Almost four centuries later we find the Assyrians again on the middle Euphrates led by another Tukulti-Inurta, the second of the name.[1] On his sixth campaign Tukulti-Inurta II[2] (890–885 B.C.) marched his army in a great circle southward down the river Tartar (parallel with the Tigris on the west) and then up the Euphrates and



Fig. 15.—Uncultivable Tamarisk Thickets along the Euphrates at Sabkhah
Part of the khan of Sabkhah in the foreground

the Khâbûr. His annals call the region "*Sirqu*" and "*Rummunidi,*" and it may be, as Scheil has suggested, that we are to recognize the oriental ancestor of the Roman Circesium in Sirqu.

It is likely to have been during this Assyrian domination that the rulers of the Khana-Mari plain noticed the natural strength of the bold promontory opposite the middle of the plain, where the western plateau thrusts forward to the river as we have

[1] This name was long read "*Tukulti-Ninib.*" The proper reading has been much discussed, for example by Clay (*Yale Oriental Series. Babylonian Texts,* Vol. I, pp. 97–99), but it is not yet entirely certain.

[2] The annals of this king turned up in the hands of antiquity dealers in Mosul at the very time when the foregoing documents concerning Khana-Mari were being recovered. This great tablet, $9\frac{1}{2}\times10\frac{1}{4}$ inches in size and bearing 147 lines of text, has been rendered available by the excellent publication of V. Scheil, *Annales de Tukulti-Ninip II roi d'Assyrie 889–884,* Paris, 1909 ("Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études," 178[me] fasc.).

already stated (p. 25). At any rate the Semitic rulers of the region placed a stronghold on the crest of this promontory, and called it simply the "burg" or "castle," which is in Assyrian *dûru*.[1] We know nothing of the history of the place which thus gained the name of Dûr or later Dura. Complete excavation over the whole top of the promontory might possibly reveal remains of the Assyrian stronghold and records of its history, but they are not yet available. Hence we cannot trace the fortunes of this remote little kingdom on the middle Euphrates during the Assyrian domination; and although it was traversed again by the campaigns of Assurnaçirpal III (885–860 B.C.), we learn next to nothing of Khana-Mari throughout the course of the Assyrian



FIG. 16.—THE EUPHRATES AT MESKENAH

At this point the Baghdad-Aleppo road, branching off toward Aleppo, 54 miles distant, forsakes the river.

Empire or of the Chaldean and Persian empires which succeeded in the control of the Euphrates world.

With the fall of the Persian Empire we again catch a glimpse of Khana-Mari. The strategic advantages of making this plain and its river buttresses the frontier gateway of the Syrian desert, protecting their Syrian dominions on the east, was at once observed, as we might have expected, by Alexander's successors. Fortunately for our investigations, the able Macedonian commander Nikanor was favorably impressed with the natural strength of Dura itself. Isidor of Charax calls Dura "a city of Nikanor, a foundation of the Macedonians."[2] This colonization must have occurred while Nikanor was governor of Mesopotamia under Seleucus I, and

[1] There can be no doubt that the Greek name of the place, Δοῦρα, has descended from the Assyrian *dûru*, "stronghold;" so also Cumont (*Syria*, IV [1923], 53).

[2] See the following footnote.

previous to 312 B.C., when he revolted against his sovereign. Apparently it proved impossible to give the place an exclusively new name, for the old Assyrian designation, Dura, continued to be used and persisted to the end. Perhaps as the result of an unsuccessful attempt on Nikanor's part to give his new foundation a name which would mark it as a Macedonian settlement in the Orient, we find that the place was "called Europos by the Greeks."[1] The recovery of the records of this Macedonian colony on the Euphrates has very strikingly revealed a new example of the penetration of the Near Orient by Greek influences after the campaigns of Alexander the Great. For these colonists from the West maintained their essentially Greek culture for generations, and the earliest monuments which Sarre and Cumont found in the place are



FIG. 17.—THE EUPHRATES AND THE PLAIN OF DEIR EZ-ZÔR

The cliffs on the horizon far back from the river are those on the left, or Mesopotamian, side of the Euphrates. The canal (p. 25) skirts these cliffs.

purely Greek in character, including even the code of laws which the colonists used, and of which a fragment written on parchment was recovered by Cumont.

The earliest houses in the town, which go back to these Macedonian colonists, and one of which had been uncovered by a British officer who showed it to us, were also partially excavated by M. Cumont.[2] They are laid out with streets at right angles, forming a city with square-block arrangement such as the architects of the Hellenistic

[1] Isid. Char., *Mans. Parth.*, 4: Δοῦρα, Νικάνορος πόλις, κτίσμα Μακεδόνων, ὑπὸ δὲ Ἑλλήνων Εὔρωπος καλεῖται (C. Müller, *Geographi Graeci Minores*, I, 248).

[2] They were first noted by Sarre and Herzfeld in their *Archäologische Reise im Euphrat- und Tigris-Gebiet*, II, 391.

period introduced in towns like Priene—a system commonly attributed to one of the architects of Alexander the Great, the Macedonian Deinocrates, who employed it in his plan of Alexandria.

Dura long continued to be a frontier stronghold of the Seleucid Empire and Polybius[1] tells how, almost a century after its foundation, our Europos was taken by Molon in his insurrection against Antiochus (221 B.C.), as the limit of the rebellious commander's advance down the Euphrates.

The situation of Dura-Europos in the heart of the northern desert, however, was too remote from the Mediterranean for it to remain permanently attached to the decaying Seleucid Empire, and after the rise of the Parthians (third century on) it was held by them. Cumont notes evidence that it was then culturally cut off from the west. While Asia Minor and Syria adopted the Julian calendar early in the



FIG. 18.—THE PLAIN AND CITY OF DEIR EZ-ZÔR

The cultivation at present extends but a short distance from the town, whose minarets are visible on the horizon.

Christian Era, Dura continued to employ the Graeco-Macedonian calendar with its inconvenient intercalary months, one of which is mentioned in the temple graffiti of Dura. For generations the place must have been completely under the domination of oriental influences, which would be felt the more in view of the fact that Arab and Aramaean settlers had long shared the town with the Macedonian colonists and mingled their life with that of the Western immigrants, as the Semitic names among the inscriptions clearly demonstrate.

It was probably at this period of the Parthian occupation that the city received at least some of its massive fortifications. At any rate it is quite evident that the extreme northwest angles of the city wall, where the townsmen later built their temple of Zeus-Baal (see pp. 68–74), were erected before the latter part of the first century of

[1] Polybius v. 48. 16, especially as explained by Eduard Meyer in Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencycl.*, *s. v.* "Europos," No. 5, against the correction of Droysen and of Benzinger. See Cumont, *Les Travaux Archéologiques*, p. 71.

the Christian Era, that is, before this region had ever seen a Roman soldier. Sarre and Herzfeld, who wrote under the impression that the city was never occupied by the Romans for any length of time, evidently regarded the fortifications as pre-Roman. If so, it would seem more probable that the Parthians erected them than that they should have been the work of the Seleucids. Stretching at its greatest length some 1,400 meters (over four-fifths of a mile) along the heights overlooking the Euphrates, and expanding over 1,000 meters (three-fifths of a mile) at its greatest breadth, the immense inclosure of the city walls is still a very impressive sight. Commanding the whole, a massive castle 50 by 390 meters (about 165 by 1,270 feet) was thrown along the brow of the cliff above the Euphrates. If done by Parthian builders, this building is a great achievement of Parthian architecture. If indeed we should attribute the fortress to them, it should be noted that we have in the vast stronghold of Dura-Ṣâliḥîyah the most imposing, if not the greatest, fortress left us by the Parthians.



Fig. 19.—Sheep Feeding on the Uncultivated Tracts of the Deir ez-Zôr Plain

In such impressive buildings they were following traditions inherited from their predecessors, the Assyrians and Babylonians, but especially the former. The impressions made upon the Romans when they first beheld these gigantic buildings of Western Asia are evident in such Roman monuments as the triumphal arch, an architectural form unquestionably derived from the Parthian palace front, which was itself in turn the offspring of the Assyrian palace façade.[1]

But the strong city of Dura, guarding the western approaches of the Parthian Empire, was long immune from western aggression. The eastward advance of Rome after 200 B.C. fell far short of the plain of Khana-Mari, and the Romans had no dealings with the Parthians until 92 B.C., when the latter made overtures to Sulla desiring the friendship of Rome. The conquest of Syria by Pompey in 64 B.C. did not even include Palmyra, which is 140 miles nearer the Mediterranean than Dura. Nevertheless the absorption of the lands around the eastern end of the Mediterranean by Rome re-established the ancient commercial connection between the Mediterranean lands

[1] See the author's *Ancient Times*, p. 611, Fig. 248.

on the one hand and the Tigro-Euphrates world on the other. On the desert roads already discussed above, the two most important stations were Palmyra and Dura. The blood of the ancient Aramaean and Phoenician traders who had carried the Aramaean tongue throughout the vast territories of the Persian Empire from the frontiers of India to the Aegean shores of Asia Minor and had distributed throughout the ancient world the first alphabet—the one from which our own is descended—was the dominant strain in these two remote desert towns. They could not fail to take advantage of the great market which the Roman conquest had opened on the west. While Palmyra is separated from the Euphrates by over 100 miles of difficult and



FIG. 20.—A WOOL CARAVAN IN THE STREETS OF DEIR EZ-ZÔR

Deir is the modern metropolis of the middle Euphrates, and the road from Aleppo to Mosul crosses the Euphrates here.

dangerous desert, this situation proved her salvation from the Parthians on the east. At the same time, when approached across the desert from the west, the oasis of Palmyra is almost equally difficult of access and hence the clever Palmyrenians long succeeded in escaping the clutches of the Roman Colossus. Situated thus in a position of enormous commercial importance on the eastern fringes of the Roman Empire, Palmyra flourished prodigiously. Her position in the east was analogous to that which had been occupied in the western Mediterranean by Carthage. Both cities were of Semitic origin. In both the traditions and racial instincts growing out of ages of commercial domination and reaching back to the dawn of history impelled them to economic leadership. As the Phoenician merchant princes of Carthage long threatened

the leadership of Rome in the western Mediterranean, so the commercial power of Palmyra was a serious obstacle to Roman expansion in the Orient. Antony failed in an attempt to raid the rich markets of Palmyra with his cavalry in 41 B.C.; and, long surviving its western prototype, this eastern Carthage of the desert pushed eastward to the Euphrates, absorbed Dura, and by the end of the first generation of the second century of our era was holding the Euphrates Valley far down toward the Babylonian plain on the route to the Persian Gulf at ᶜAnah.[1]

In this prosperous commercial kingdom of Palmyra, Dura occupied an important strategic point commanding the caravan route of the Euphrates crossing, which united



FIG. 21.—ACROSS THE ROOFS OF DEIR EZ-ZÔR

Palmyra with the East. As I have already stated, Dura is about 140 miles almost due east of Palmyra, and in a brief airplane flight which I made along the Euphrates above and westward from Albu Kamâl, I could see that the country west of the Euphrates toward Palmyra was quite easily traversable. The engineer Černik also reports the practicability of the route across the desert between Palmyra and Dura-Ṣâliḥîyah.[2] Dura thus enjoyed strategic advantages in traffic which gave it an important share in the commercial prosperity of the Palmyrene kingdom to which it was subject. Public buildings, the customary expression of such prosperity in the ancient world, were not wanting. The earliest important building of this kind at Dura was

[1] Cumont, *Syria*, III (1922), 210 (note 1).

[2] Černik, *op. cit.*, p. 18. The later British military surveys also show a road from Ṣâliḥîyah to Palmyra.

a sanctuary or place of assembly, presumably of stone masonry. Its stone seats for the aristocracy were found, when Cumont cleared away the rubbish, still bearing carved upon each seat the name of its regular occupant, like the seats in the theater of Dionysus at Athens. Each name was preceded by the date 373 of the Seleucid Era, which corresponds to A.D. 61. The names display a curious mixture of Greek and Semitic, naturally resulting from the commingling of races which had been going on at the place for nearly four centuries. The building itself had been put up thirty years before the introduction of the seats, that is, in A.D. 31, by one Ammonios, son of Apollophanes, son of Seleucus, as a pious contribution to the life of the town.[1] Two



FIG. 22.—THE BRIDGE AT DEIR EZ-ZÔR

This bridge connects the town with an island in the Euphrates. A bridge connecting the island with the other (Mesopotamian) shore has long been planned but never built.

other buildings, close by, erected for purposes of public assembly, also testify to the prosperity of the town at this time.[2]

Not more than two generations after the erection of the first building just mentioned, that is to say, not long before A.D. 100 and perhaps earlier, the flourishing town of Dura erected an oriental temple to the Palmyrenian gods, the great triad of Palmyra, Baalsamin (Zeus-Baal, or Zeus Megistos), Aglibol, and Yarhibol. In doing so they left the group of three buildings enumerated above and withdrew to an angle of the city wall at the extreme western salience of the fortifications. In a

[1] See Cumont, *Comptes rendus* (January 12, 1923), and *Les Travaux Archéologiques*, pp. 59–60.

[2] See Cumont, *ibid.*

quadrangular area where the city wall, returning upon itself, surrounded the proposed building spot on three sides (see Fig. 55, p. 93), they erected the new sanctuary on a ground plan which tradition had transmitted in Syria from old Babylonian temple buildings. Prominent in the pious enterprise was the family of one Konon, who may have been the most powerful citizen of the place. The family of Konon employed Ilasamsos, an oriental painter doubtless living at Durá, to adorn the walls with surprisingly ambitious paintings. That they should have had at their disposal an oriental painter of such ability as Ilasamsos is striking evidence of the high level of Palmyrenian civilization in the first century of our era. In the sanctuary and looking down upon the temple shrine containing the sacred images of the gods, this painter draughted upon the wall in splendid colors a group of eleven life-size figures, including



Fig. 23.—A Corner of Deir ez-Zôr and the Gardens on the Island

at least three and perhaps four generations of the family of Konon engaged in worship (Plate VIII, and pp. 76–88). To most of the leading figures in the scene the artist has appended their names, from which we learn the identity of these forgotten worthies of the Euphrates world who died eighteen centuries ago. It is a curiously unexpected fact that, in the first century of our era, a family of renown in such a remote provincial city should have had themselves thus depicted on the walls of the sanctuary, precisely as noble families fifteen centuries later were wont to do in the Christian churches of Europe, as so commonly at Florence. It is also a very suggestive fact that we should find among them, occupying a position of central importance in the scene, a princely lady gorgeously appareled and splendid in adornments of gold and precious stones (Plate XI). In her we must without doubt recognize just such a noble Syrian lady as arose a century later in neighboring Palmyra in the person of the familiar Zenobia; and it is of interest to note that in the name

of Bithnanaia borne by our noble lady of Dura, we have a name of the same formation as that of Zenobia (see pp. 86–87). In costume and appearance on state occasions the famous Zenobia of Palmyra will have been a counterpart of our Bithnanaia of Dura.

Perhaps about a quarter of a century later, that is, in A.D. 114, Lysias, a man of the third generation of this noble family, erected along the north side of the temple court, and abutting on the fortress wall immediately behind, a dwelling presumably for the priests of the temple, as an act of piety toward the gods of the place. He recorded his pious deed in an inscription in the court which was recovered in the course of Cumont's clearance.[1]



FIG. 24.—ARAB BOYS OF DEIR EZ-ZÔR

It is a question of whether such a development of the life and civilization of Dura could have taken place under Parthian domination. It is not unlikely that the growing power of the flourishing town had already thrown off the Parthian overlordship before the first arrival of the Roman legions. When the people of Dura looked down upon the Roman eagles for the first time, as Trajan passed along the opposite (left) bank of the Euphrates in A.D. 115, it is therefore probable that the Parthian garrison had already long evacuated the place. But the fine strategic wisdom of Hadrian would not permit him to hold for Rome a region so dangerously exposed as were the new oriental conquests of Trajan.

[1] Cumont, *Comptes rendus* (January 12, 1923).

Later on, however, when Lucius Verus won his victory over the Parthians in A.D. 162, Dura[1] must have fallen again into Roman hands; but if a Roman garrison occupied the place at this time, there is now no surviving trace of their presence. Two generations later, however, in A.D. 229, a cohort of Palmyrenians numbered the XXth left a dedication in the temple to Alexander Severus, at a time when Rome was endeavoring to check the rising power of New Persia under Ardashir. Of this probably brief Roman occupation but a single Latin inscription survives in the place, in so far as excavation has disclosed its records. It is probable, as Cumont has already noted, that these Roman forces were thrown into the fortress of Dura in the time of Septimius Severus to protect his advance eastward into Mesopotamia. We may



FIG. 25.—MEYADÎN AND THE PLAIN OF KHANA-MARI

perhaps attribute to the Roman commanders of this period the thickening and strengthening of the city walls still observable at some points (Plate V, 1). Quite evidently belonging to this period is a memorial of their sojourn left by these troops at Dura on the wall of Hall I in the Zeus temple (Plate XXI)—a wall-painting in which we have the easternmost representation of Roman troops now surviving. Their commander, the tribune Julius Terentius, has had himself represented sacrificing at the head of his followers to the divinities of Dura and Palmyra. The legionaries shown in this painting worshiping the Tyche of Palmyra will without doubt have been levied at the latter city, and are thus evincing their desire to enjoy the favor of the Fortuna of their own home city, together with whom they also reverence the Fortuna of Dura.

[1] The evidence that this battle took place near Dura-Europos rather than at Jerablûs-Europos, much farther up the Euphrates, has been set forth by Cumont, *Les Travaux Archéologiques*, pp. 73 f.

We cannot discern the fortunes of the frontier stronghold of Dura during the destructive wars which made the third century of our era a counterpart of the terrible third century B.C. Nevertheless, some of the catastrophes of that disastrous century took place not far from Dura. The young Emperor Gordian III was assassinated hardly more than a day's march from the city in A.D. 244, and the massive monument which his troops raised to his memory was long a feature of the landscape in the Dura region on the left bank of the Euphrates, although it has not been identified with certainty in modern times. The Arab assassin Philip, who thus thought to usurp the throne of the Caesars by the murder of Gordian III, was a predecessor of other and similarly ambitious orientals in the Near East. At Palmyra the able prince Odenathus, taking advantage of the preoccupation of the Roman emperors with wars which hurried



FIG. 26.—THE ARID PLAIN OF KHANA-MARI AND THE PLATEAU HORIZON

The plain is cultivated at present only on the fringes of the towns and hamlets, leaving most of it an unproductive steppe.

the legions from Syria to Gaul, succeeded with the help of his gifted queen Zenobia in making his desert city a formidable power. Dura must have shared in the prosperity of Palmyra and felt the growing power by which Odenathus was striving to make his kingdom an oriental empire like that of the Seleucids or the kings of Parthia. When Aurelian's triumph in distracted Gaul enabled him to turn his attention to the East, the defeat which he inflicted on Zenobia (A.D. 273) was transformed into complete destruction by the emperor's orders to massacre the entire population of Palmyra. The famous kingdom of Zenobia disappeared, and the destruction which overtook Palmyra has left surviving but very scanty wreckage of that important Syrian civilization of the Aramaeans of which it had been the expression.

Half a generation after the fall of Zenobia and the destruction of Palmyra, Diocletian determined to place the frontier stronghold of the Roman Empire on the Euphrates

at the north end of the plain of Khana-Mari, at the narrow defile above the mouth of the Khâbûr (p. 24). The fortress of Circesium which he erected here is some 40-odd miles above Dura. Left thus over two days' march outside the boundaries of the Empire, Dura was thrown back upon itself and its desert surroundings. Stripped of all protection from the desert barbarians, the people of Dura seem slowly to have forsaken the place. In striking contrast with Palmyra, therefore, Dura suffered no violent destruction. It lay much too far out in the desert for the legions of Aurelian to carry their devastations thither. Nor did the legionaries ever occupy it again. As Cumont's excavations have disclosed, its buildings and monuments fell gradually into decay and betray no sign of any violent overthrow or destructive



Fig. 27.—The Euphrates and the Plain of Khana-Mari from the Plateau at Ṣâliḥîyah

conflagration. A Christian ascetic was dwelling as a hermit in the ruins of the city as early as the reign of Constantine (A.D. 324–337).[1] A generation or more later, when Emperor Julian passed the place on his ill-fated expedition of A.D. 363, the place was already a desert. Although like other Roman commanders he marched down the other (left) bank of the river, he was able to observe the complete desolation of the place, where lions and gazelles had already taken possession of the dwellings of men.[2]

In course of time the roof of the forsaken temple of Zeus-Baal fell in, and the rubbish from the fall rose sufficiently high to cover and to preserve the lower zone of

[1] G. Hoffmann, "Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer," *Abhandl. der deutschen Morgenl. Ges.*, VII, No. 3 (1880), p. 28.

[2] Ammianus Marc. xxiii. 5. 8: "Duram desertum oppidum"; xxiv. 1. 5: "Prope civitatem venimus Duram desertam." Similarly Zosimus iii. 14: *Ἦλθε .... ἐντεῦθεν εἰς Δοῦρα, ἴχνος μὲν ὡς ἄρα ποτὲ πόλις ἦν φέρουσαν, τότε δὲ ἔρημον.*

paintings from destruction at the hands of fanatical Arabs. Over the whole place a mantle of sand carried in by the desert winds slowly collected until it lay over the town—in some places as deep as 2 meters. Along the southwest side facing the

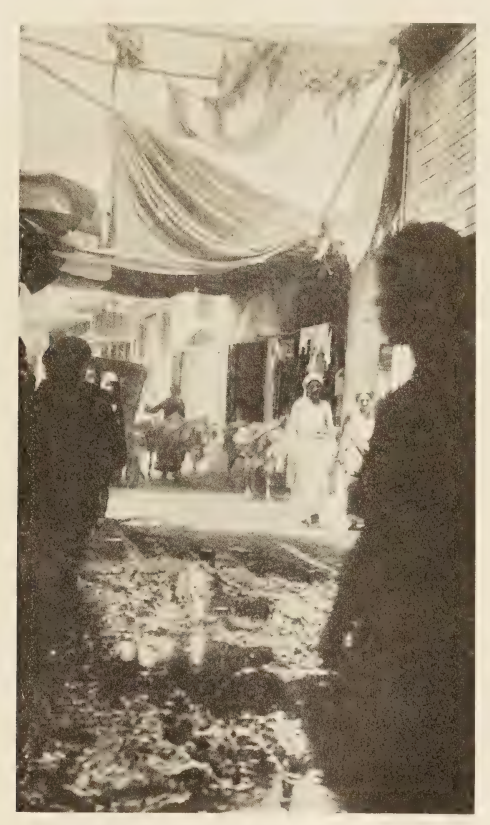


Fig. 28.—Glimpse of the Bazaars in Baghdad

desert the great drifts of sand rose almost to the parapet of the fortress walls and today mask the height of the masonry and reduce it to ignoble proportions (Plate I, 2).

With the decay of all centralized political power, the plain of Khana-Mari, lying as it then did outside the Roman Empire, rapidly declined. Its absorption by New Persia and its conquest by the Moslems in the seventh and eighth centuries of the

Christian Era left it without leadership, and its resources were not worth the attention of the Moslem conquerors. The desert encroached upon its fields, the irrigation canal from the Khâbûr was choked up, there was insufficient grain and other food, and the population steadily decreased. Thus the towns were forsaken as the fields shrank to a scanty fringe around each village, and the solitude of the prehistoric wilderness from which it had originally come settled upon the plain of Khana-Mari. Upon this desolate wilderness, once green with far-stretching fields, the forsaken walls of the great fortress of Dura looked mutely down for centuries. As the Arabs wandered in from the desert and strolled over it, they naturally associated a fortress so imposing with the heroic memories of Saladin (Ṣalâḥ ed-Dîn), as they commonly do, and like a number of other such places they called it Ṣâliḥîyah, "place of Ṣalâḥ." Thus its ancient



Fig. 29.—The Bridge of Boats over the Tigris and Palm Groves at Baghdad

Assyrian name of Dura and its later Macedonian name of Europos were finally forgotten, and survived in modern times only in the few scanty historical references in ancient Greek and Roman writers which have been cited above. Nor, as we have seen, had modern historians any idea of the identity of the ancient stronghold. For many centuries since its first establishment by the Assyrians or possibly the Babylonians and for some six hundred years more after its foundation by the great Macedonian general, it had guarded the crossing of the Euphrates where the traffic of East and West passed over the historic river, and thereafter it was a lost city for sixteen centuries.

Into its silent defenses General Cunningham, the commander of the British Army on the Euphrates in the Great War, after a sharp engagement with the Arabs, threw his farthest outpost early in 1920.[1] These British representatives of the greatest of

[1] There was a small scouting detachment which was stationed a few miles farther up the river and for a time there was British occupation in Deir ez-Zôr, but Ṣâliḥîyah marks the uppermost position of the British Army on the Euphrates in 1920.

modern empires probably little dreamed of the significance of this place in the history of the greatest of ancient empires. Nor could they or anyone else, when they entered the fortress of Ṣâliḥîyah, have had any premonition of the unfolding vista of ancient human life and development which was to result from the British occupation of the venerable stronghold. All about them lay a rich treasury of human documents from remote ages. In the relatively dry climate which this region enjoys, the winter rains had not penetrated far into the mantle of protecting sands. Beneath this covering lay almost perfectly preserved the monuments of this ancient border land between East and West. Their recovery has revealed to us something of the history of Khana-Mari as we have sketched it above, and disclosed to us monuments of art which anticipated and which contributed essentially to the development of art in Europe.

The story of the recovery of these monuments furnishes the final episodes in the history of Dura, accompanied unhappily by the melancholy fact of the destruction or serious damage of the great painting which forms the chief subject of this volume. The vandalism of Arab ignorance and fanaticism, to which this destruction is due, is now only held in check by temporary French occupation, while Cumont continues for a time the effort to save what may yet be rescued from a place so remote and difficult of access. In the long and often repeated alternation of eastern and western power in the plain of Khana-Mari, which has gone on now for some five thousand years, the occupation of Dura by the British and its present permanent tenure by France under her Syrian mandate are the renewed extension of western supremacy in the ancient Near East, so often asserted and so often lost.

II

THE DISCOVERY OF THE DURA-ṢÂLIḤÎYAH PAINTINGS

The route down the Euphrates, as we have observed (p. 48), followed the east or left bank of the river throughout ancient history until the Arab occupation. Modern explorers desirous of following the ancient road have commonly passed along the east side of the river, and Dura-Ṣâliḥîyah, lying on the west (right) bank has usually found but casual mention, as various travelers have recorded their impressions in viewing it across the stream. Thus Sachau went up the east bank and Miss Gertrude Bell went down the same bank in 1909. In 1872, however, the engineer Černik visited the site and published a brief summary of his observations.[1] It was not until 1898 when F. Sarre visited Ṣâliḥîyah that archaeological examination of the place was begun. He inspected it several times subsequently—for the last time in 1911–12—but did not publish his results until 1920, in combination with E. Herzfeld in their monumental work on the ancient remains in the Tigro-Euphrates world.[2]

On the return of the Mesopotamian expedition of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago from the upper Tigris and its arrival in Baghdad on April 23, 1920, the Civil Commissioner, Colonel A. T. (now Sir Arnold) Wilson, and General (now Sir) Percy Hambro, the Quartermaster General, sent me information to the effect that they would be glad if we could undertake to ascend the Euphrates on an archaeological mission on their behalf. Colonel Wilson explained to me the circumstances which prompted his request and handed me a small file of papers which he said would further inform me of the reasons for the desirability of our journey up the Euphrates.

On opening the papers I found an unfinished drawing in colored crayon of four human figures standing in a row and beside them a series of letters indicating the places of four additional figures in the same row. Under the sketch was a written note reading: "Rough sketch of a wall decoration excavated at Salihiyeh" [Ṣâliḥîyah]. The drawing and the note were made by General Cunningham, who was in command on the upper Euphrates. My curiosity was naturally at once aroused and, looking farther through the papers, I discovered a dispatch addressed to Colonel Leachman

[1] Černik, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

[2] Friedrich Sarre and Ernst Herzfeld, *Archäologische Reise im Euphrat- und Tigris-Gebiet* (4 vol.), Vol. II, pp. 386–95, Abb. 371–77, and Vol. III, Plates LXXXI–LXXXIII, together with a plan of the fortress by Schulz. I regret that when my article in *Syria*, first publishing the Ṣâliḥîyah paintings, was written I was not yet acquainted with this valuable work, as it had not reached our library.

and signed by Captain M. C. Murphy. It was dated March 31, 1920, at "Albukemal" and read as follows:

> While at Salihiyah I discovered on 30th inst. some ancient wall paintings in a wonderful state of preservation. The paintings are in the west corner of the fort and consist of life-size figures of three men, one woman, and three other figures partly obliterated. The colours are mainly reds, yellows and black. There is also some writing which I have tried to reproduce below.
>
> I should be glad if you would forward this to the proper quarter.
>
> (*signed*) Murphy, Capt.
> R. A. V. C.

This dispatch was covered by a note from Lieutenant Colonel Leachman to the Civil Commissioner which I read with unusual interest:

> As a result of our occupation of the old fort at Salahiyeh and the digging of trenches, a certain amount of finds have been made. The paintings to which the attached refers are most interesting & should, I think, be seen by an expert. If your American archaeologist is still about, it would well repay him to come & see this. The films enclosed are of the pictures. Could you please have them developed. If anyone comes up, it should be soon for obvious reasons. .
>
> (*signed*) G. Leachman

The papers had evidently been sent to Miss Gertrude Bell, the intrepid explorer and well-known archaeologist, now holding an important post in the British administration in Mesopotamia. Miss Bell had promptly responded as follows:

> Look at the enclosed—it seems to me to be most curious & interesting. A. T. [Wilson] says if Prof. Breasted will go & look at it he'll provide him with transport & would be very grateful for his advice. We both beg him to fit it into his programme if he possibly can.

The whole correspondence was covered by a letter from the Civil Commissioner to General Sir Percy Hambro requesting me to call and stating that the Civil Commissioner would "be very glad if he [Breasted] could be sent, presuming that G. H. Q. agree to his entering *what is very much of a war area.*"

As the British authorities had thus far thought it unsafe to allow our expedition to go up the Euphrates more than 100 miles at most, for reasons disclosed in the foregoing correspondence, I seized the opportunity with the greatest pleasure; but asked for a fortnight to be spent among the monuments on the Persian border first. I had noticed the statement in Colonel Leachman's letter that "If anyone comes up it should be soon for obvious reasons." In strict confidence the Civil Commissioner then informed me that there would be no time for us to make the trip to Persia because a withdrawal known only to the High Command was about to be undertaken—an operation which would shift the British frontier on the Euphrates almost 100 miles farther down the river. This withdrawal was occasioned by difficulties in a line of transport communications excessively long. If we went to Persia first, therefore,

the paintings would by that time lie far out in Arab territory beyond the British lines, where they would be absolutely inaccessible without the protection of the troops, who could not be dispatched thither again. Furthermore the paintings would be exposed to the fanaticism of the bigoted Arabs, who would undoubtedly destroy them, as indeed in spite of precautions they have done since our departure from the place. It was evident that we should leave for the upper Euphrates at once.

On April 28 in seven automobiles kindly furnished us by the British Army and Civil Government we left Baghdad for the upper Euphrates.[1] The accidents and



Fig. 30.—British Gunboat on the Lower Euphrates at Fallûjah

This is the usual point for crossing to the south (or west) side of the Euphrates on the Baghdad Aleppo route (see Map 1). When we reached it, the bridge of boats (like that at Baghdad) had been carried away; we were obliged to ascend to the bridge at Ramâdi, where we were overtaken by darkness among the hostile tribes who shortly afterward murdered the intrepid Colonel Leachman.

delays of desert travel by automobile were such that the nearly 300-mile trip from Baghdad to the British frontier on the middle Euphrates occupied an entire week. This was particularly unfortunate, for it deprived us of the time which we had hoped to devote to the study of Ṣâliḥîyah and its paintings. Twenty-seven miles from Ṣâliḥîyah, that is, below it, we found the British headquarters at Albu Kamâl, where we were very kindly received by General Cunningham and his officers. Lieutenant

[1] This journey has been briefly described in *Oriental Institute Communications No. 1*, pp. 25–32.

Colonel Leachman, of whose tragic death at the hands of the Arabs on his way down the Euphrates a short time after our arrival we had no premonition, even cleared out his office to make room for our five field beds. To all these gentlemen at Albu Kamâl, whose many kindnesses we remember with gratitude, it is a pleasure to express our appreciation here. To Lieutenant Colonel Leachman it was chiefly due that we were able to continue our journey beyond Ṣâliḥîyah and up the Euphrates to Aleppo and the Mediterranean. We were thus, I believe, the first western expedition to cross the Arab state from Baghdad to the Mediterranean after it was proclaimed. It is not necessary to repeat the journal of this, for us, memorable journey, but it will contribute to a correct understanding of the physical background of the civilization



Fig. 31.—The Seven Cars of Our Caravan between Fallûjah and Ramâdi on the Lower Euphrates

with which we are dealing to include a rapid panorama of the route from Baghdad to the Mediterranean, which the reader will find in the accompanying photographs (Figs. 28–50).

As soon as possible after we reached Albu Kamâl General Cunningham kindly drove with me the 27 miles from the Albu Kamâl headquarters to Ṣâliḥîyah for a preliminary examination of the paintings on the afternoon of May 3. On the way he showed me the battlefield on which the British had but a short time before inflicted a severe defeat on the Arabs, who were nevertheless still maintaining a hostile attitude. Sniping and desultory fighting, such as had preceded the battle, were still going on. Indeed after we left ʿAnah on our way up, the hostile tribes had been firing across the river at various points, and we realized that Sir Percy Hambro was quite right in

calling the region "very much of a war area." Driving in at the eastern or south-eastern angle of the great fortress of Ṣâliḥîyah, we found British East Indian troops camping within, alongside the vast northern castle, under the command of Major Wright-Warren. I was surprised at the extent and massiveness of the enormous stronghold as we drove along its entire length parallel with the Euphrates and drew up near the western angles of the wall. Descending from the car, General Cunningham led the way over the rubbish piles commonly found in such ruins and around a jutting corner of massive masonry. Suddenly there rose before us (Fig. 53, p. 89) a high wall covered with an imposing painting in many colors depicting a life-size group of eleven



Fig. 32.—Beginning of the Plateau above Ramâdi and below Hit

In this region the Baghdad-Aleppo road passes out of the alluvial plain of Babylonia and approaches the narrow valley of the Euphrates eroded in the desert plateau. The cliffs of the plateau are seen in the background; in the foreground, trenches from the Great War.

persons engaged in worship. My surprise at the extent of the vast fortress now gave way to amazement, as I gazed at these wonderful figures looking gravely down upon us, and as suddenly disclosed as if they had been conjured up by magic from the silent wastes of the desert which stretched out far below us. It was a startling revelation of the fact that in this deserted stronghold we were standing in a home of ancient Syrian civilization completely lost to the western world for sixteen centuries. A hundred and forty miles nearer the Mediterranean lay the desolate ruins of Palmyra, which Zenobia and her husband had made the beautiful capital of a powerful commercial empire. Here on the painted wall (Plate VIII) I saw, emerging from what

might have been a palace doorway, a queenly lady arrayed in royal splendor, with gentlemen richly clad ranged on her either hand. Could this be Zenobia herself looking out upon us from the sanctuary wall in one of her dependent cities of sixteen centuries ago? Then my eye fell upon written words traced across the front of her skirt, and I read in Greek: "Bithnanaia, daughter of Konon." It was not Zenobia, but she and her family were obviously heirs of Graeco-Syrian culture represented here by precious memorials, for recording and preserving which I realized we had but a few brief hours before the British evacuation would leave us without protection and force us to depart.

We stood in a roofless structure of massive masonry, and it was evident that the wall paintings were in a transverse hall, which must have been the holy of holies of a



FIG. 33.—OUR CARS STALLED NEAR ḤADÎTHAH IN A DESOLATE STRETCH BETWEEN HIT AND ʿANAH

sanctuary of some kind. The roof, undoubtedly an arch or vault, had been relatively high and above the great painting there were still clearly visible the lower portions of a second upper range or zone of paintings, of which almost all had been carried away by the falling of the plaster (see Plate VIII and p. 76).[1] It was evident that, besides studying the painting, we must also investigate the building. At General Cunningham's request Major Wright-Warren agreed to furnish several squads of East Indian troops for the further excavation of the building, in the endeavor to clear the ground plan and also to lay bare other painted walls, which we could see in the

[1] It must have been these traces of the upper row which were seen by Sarre. He remarks that he saw "Reste eines Fresko-Gemäldes in einem Gebäude nahe der W.-Ecke der Stadt, aus rustica-ähnlichen Gipsquadern errichtet" (Sarre-Herzfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 392).

hall preceding that of Bithnanaia. Having made these arrangements, we returned to spend the night at headquarters in Albu Kamâl.

Early on the morning of May 4 we bade our kind hosts at headquarters farewell. We were not to see them again. Major Wright-Warren's detachment was about to abandon its outpost at Ṣâliḥîyah and return to headquarters at Albu Kamâl, whence all were to withdraw down the river. They wished us success and good luck on our coming dash through the Arabs and up the Euphrates to the Mediterranean. It was still early when we drew up alongside the sanctuary of the paintings. The East Indians were already at work clearing the walls, and, in the first chamber (Hall I), we saw to our surprise a small scene in which a Roman tribune was depicted at the



FIG. 34.—OUR BRITISH CONVOY HALTING AT NAHÎYAH JUST ABOVE ᶜANAH

In this region between ᶜAnah and Ṣâliḥîyah the hostile Arabs on the other (left) shore of the Euphrates were shooting across the river, and the protection of a military convoy was necessary.

head of his troops, engaged in the worship of what looked like three statues of Roman emperors painted on the wall. There was the tribune's name written beside him in Roman letters: "Julius Terentius, tribune," and before him was the red battle flag of Roman troops, the only one of which the color is preserved, reminding us of Plutarch's tale of the red flag hoisted over the tent of Varro before the battle of Cannae. Here were these tokens of Roman occupation full 35 miles outside of the well-known Roman frontier at Circesium by the mouth of the Khâbûr, which we were not expecting to see until we had put a two days' march behind us. We had before us the easternmost Romans ever found on the Euphrates, or anywhere else for that matter. Meantime the ground plan, as the Indian troops continued to work, was beginning to emerge.

In spite of two columns discernible in front of the two painted halls, it was now evident that in plan the building was clearly identical with that of the old Babylonian temples of much earlier age.

With this archaic architecture following traditions which reached back to remote ages of Babylonian culture, and its rich mural decorations revealing both Graeco-Syrian and Roman civilization, the building was a historical document of the first rank; while the enormous stronghold in which it was imbedded equally required to be recorded and made available. Here was a task which might occupy a large expedition for months or years; and we had, before the British evacuation, but *a single day in which to record and rescue this great body of documents.* A moment's reflection made it evident that we must devote ourselves to the great painting on the wall of Bithnanaia



Fig. 35.—Camels of the British Military Transport below Albu Kamâl

in preference to everything else. One of the faces in this remarkable painting (Plate XIX)—and General Cunningham had informed me it was the finest face in the entire group—had already been barbarously scratched out, presumably by some prowling Arab who had succeeded in gaining entrance to the place. This disfigured face which had survived for eighteen centuries, to suffer destruction after it seemed to be safely in our hands, was a distressing demonstration of what would happen after we left, and admonished us to save the rest if possible. I therefore asked Dr. Luckenbill to take our largest camera, which was only 5×7 inches, and figure by figure to make photographs of the great painting, on as large a scale as possible, while I made detailed archaeological notes on the entire composition, including full data as to the colors and their distribution. Although I had never used the method before, it seemed probable that my field notes would make it possible, after our return to civilization, to insert the approximate colors of the original in enlarged prints of the field negatives. This at least was the only method available in the lamentably brief

time at our disposition. The other gentlemen were asked to make a sketch plan and to insert in it all the dimensions which they found it possible to measure, as fast as the Indian troops laid bare the ground plan.

The sun was low in the west when Dr. Luckenbill and I had finished our work on the wall of Bithnanaia and the other fragmentary paintings in Hall II. We then turned our attention to Hall I, and especially to the painting of the Roman tribune. The excavation of the hall was confined to a trench skirting the painted walls, and the deep rubbish which filled the room prevented placing the camera properly. Furthermore, the great painting had exhausted all our 5×7 inch plates but one. We dug a recess for the camera as best we could in order to get it low enough and far enough from the wall, but were unable to secure a remove from the wall sufficiently



FIG. 36.—BRITISH HEADQUARTERS AT ALBU KAMÂL

far to insure the inclusion of the whole painting: one of the three emperors (as we thought them) and one of the two goddesses fell outside the range of the instrument. We had been racing with the declining day and the fading light. It was not possible to dig out more of the rubbish and secure a better position. The exposure must be made at once or there would be no light with which to make it. With the sun on the western rim of the desert the slide was drawn and the last plate we had took a faint twilight impression of the easternmost Romans ever found depicted on a wall.

There was nothing more to be done in securing a fuller record of the paintings, except to edit one's notes while one's memory was fresh and vivid. The younger members of the party made a tour of the city walls, doing as much pacing as possible in order to gain some impressions of the size and extent of the stronghold.[1]

[1] It was impossible in this hasty inspection to secure data for an accurate plan of the fortress, and the plan which I first published in *Syria* needs serious correction. See p. 63.

Realizing fully the hasty character of our observations and the unparalleled opportunity presented by the place, we were a weary and rather discouraged party as we crept into our field beds that night. Nevertheless we stowed away the plates and the notebooks with the consciousness that more could hardly be expected from a single day's work. In the gloom preceding the dawn we devoured a hurried and chilly breakfast, and, bidding Major Wright-Warren farewell, we climbed into our Turkish *arabanahs,* joined presently by several mounted Arab rifles, an escort of friendly Arabs which we owed to the thoughtfulness of Lieutenant Colonel Leachman. The *arabanah,* drawn by horses, is not a vehicle suited for speed, and it seemed tantalizingly slow after the automobiles, which we had of course surrendered to our British friends on leaving their lines. Having left the protection of the British troops, therefore, we did not find a dash across no man's land in an *arabanah* a wholly reassuring experience, and, for the sake of our Ṣâliḥîyah records at least, we were not a little relieved when we were met by an escort sent out by the pasha from Deir ez-Zôr to receive us. We did not then know what we afterward learned, that a Jewish merchant approaching Deir ez-Zôr had just been relieved by his escort of some thousands of pounds in gold which he had in his bags. It was, nevertheless, evident that our situation was too unsafe to permit us to visit the little Arab village of Tell ᶜAshâra, perched on the mound covering Tirḳa, the ancient capital of Khana. Leaving it at some distance on our right, therefore, we traversed the plain of Khana and spent our first night among the Arabs in Meyadîn. It does not fall within the purpose of this volume to recount our further adventures on this memorable journey through the tribes of the upper middle Euphrates, through whom we carried our records in safety. In another fortnight we were safe within the zone of civilization at Beirût, where Dr. Luckenbill developed his excellent negatives and we contemplated with great satisfaction the figures of our ancient Syrian friends from the walls of Ṣâliḥîyah, figures which my field notes would enable us to endow with the hues and colors of life.

III

THE CITY AND FORTRESS OF DURA

The plain of modern Deir ez-Zôr, which furnished the agricultural basis for the support of a tiny kingdom, has already been discussed in the historical sketch of the city (Chapter I). A salience of the desert plateau from the west and southwest, thrusting forward across the plain clear to the river at Dura-Ṣâliḥîyah, forms a buttress, quite isolated and protected on three sides by its natural situation. This buttress is about 80 meters in height above the level of the river.[1] As may be seen very clearly in the airplane view (Fig. 55, p. 93), the promontory drops on the north sheer to the channel of the Euphrates, which here flows east by south, curving at the same time directly to the east. The actual bed of the river has in modern times shifted away from the city, under the walls of which it must once have flowed. The two flanks of the natural buttress on northwest and southeast are sharply cut off from the rest of the plateau by two precipitous *wadis* (*AB* and *CD* in Fig. 55), leaving only one side of the inclosed promontory, that is, the southwest (*BC*), accessible to attack. We have already seen that the strength of the position was not overlooked by the Assyrians, whose occupation of it gave it its name of "Stronghold" (*dûr*). It is perhaps not an accident that the only wall of the fortress whose direction is not dictated by the local topography, that is, the wall on the weak southwest side toward the plateau (*BC*), extends in a line exactly northwest to southeast, which is the customary direction for the sides of buildings and cities in ancient Babylonia and Assyria.

It was on this buttress of the plateau that the Macedonian Nikanor laid out his city, on the customary rectangular, four-square plan. Our hurried stay afforded us no opportunity to examine the area within the fortress. The credit for discerning the date of this settlement, on chiefly archaeological grounds, must be given to Sarre and Herzfeld.[2] The preliminary study of the city by Cumont, who was able to employ the spade there, amply confirmed this date and, although it has not yet proceeded far enough to reveal the arrangement of the city plan, it has furnished an account of three

[1] This figure is taken from Černik (*op. cit.*, p. 17). My own impression would not have made the place as high as Černik reports; but he made careful profiles across the valley in this region and as an engineer is without doubt to be relied on.

[2] They describe it as "eine Ruinenstadt, die nur kurze Zeit bestand; die hellenistische Schicht ist die einzige und liegt unmittelbar unter der Oberfläche und auf dem gewachsenen Felsen. Die Zeit dieser Besiedelung ist . . . . die Wende unserer Aera, das erste christliche Jahrhundert. Das ist aber in dieser Landschaft die Zeit Palmyras" (*op. cit.*, p. 394). Without the evidence of the paintings and additional inscriptions, not yet available at the time of Sarre and Herzfeld's studies, it was impossible to discern that the city had endured in reality some six hundred years; but otherwise

public buildings and several houses (pp. 42–43 and 38). Neither are we as yet in a situation to offer any *final* discussion of the great walls which surround the city. Nevertheless, in view of the fact that it is likely to be long before any final investigation of the entire fortress can be made, a summary of the available information may be of some service.

The great stronghold stretches across the entire promontory from *wadi* to *wadi* (*AB* to *CD*). The walls therefore follow the margin of the desert buttress, skirting the Euphrates side and the two *wadis;* but on the southwest side crossing the promontory from the upper end of the northwest *wadi* (*B*) to a point near the upper end of the other or southeast *wadi* (*C*). This was the only side on which the fortress was open to attack from the level face of the desert plateau on the southwest (see Fig. 55 and Pl. II). It is some four-fifths of a mile from *wadi* to *wadi* and the longest dimension of the great inclosure in a general northwest-southeast line is about 1,400 meters as measured by Sarre and Herzfeld.[1] Its greatest width is about 1,000 meters. Along the river front (*AD*) the northern line of the fortress is about 850 meters in length, while the opposite wall, facing the plateau on the southwest side (*BC*), is about 1,175 meters long. A large part of the inclosed area along the southwest wall and inward toward the center of the city is much higher than along the river wall, so that, as the ground falls away, the north or northeast wall along the Euphrates (*AD*) is much higher than elsewhere. On this somewhat lower ground along the height overlooking the river was erected an enormously massive *castellum* of vast size. It is 50 meters wide and 390 meters, that is, almost a quarter of a mile, in length. Its outer corners are strengthened by salient towers. The only well-preserved gate (*E*) at present observable is in the southwest wall (*BC*). It is square in ground plan like the towers distributed at intervals along this wall and distinguishable in the airplane view. The masonry is composed of white, calcareous stone, called by Sarre and Herzfeld "Gipsstein." The blocks are cut with rectangular faces and are of the same height throughout the same course. In size they vary greatly but are most frequently about one fourth to half a meter in height.

The date of this important stronghold is still not entirely settled. Regarding the gate (*E*) in the southwest wall, Sarre and Herzfeld state that in its arrangement it is

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their determination of the date of the place is entirely correct. Similarly their conclusion that it was never included in the Roman or Byzantine Empire, but that it had flourished as an outpost of Palmyra, like the town Zenobia on the northeast of Palmyra, is only slightly to be modified by the new data now available.

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 388–90. All the other dimensions of the fortress employed in the foregoing discussion are likewise from this useful survey, which includes the first plan of the walls ever issued. The hasty sketch-plan which I included in my article in *Syria* is very incorrect and should now be superseded by the plan of Sarre and Herzfeld (surveyed by Schulz) and the airplane view above published for the first time. At this writing Cumont's new plan, which will displace all but the airplane view, has not yet appeared.

Byzantine in type. It is possible that the city walls were not the work of any one generation, and that this gate is a later construction. Two different constructive stages are quite certain in the cross-section of wall shown in Plate V. For the portion of the city wall overlooking the northwest *wadi* (*AB*) and containing the Zeus-Baal temple, however, a date not later than the latter half of the first century of our era is certain.

The structural chronology is clear at this point (*B*). An examination of Plate VI, 1, discloses that the temple of Zeus-Baal at the extreme western corner of the fortress (see *B*, Fig. 55, p. 93) was erected in a salience of the fort which is protected by walls of great height and massiveness. The builders of the temple made as much use of the



Fig. 37.—Starting for an Airplane Examination of the Khana-Mari Plain

Through the kindness of General Cunningham, Dr. Luckenbill and the author were given an opportunity to study the region above Albu Kamâl from the air.

fortress masonry as they could. As we shall see in examining the temple (chapter iv), the south wall of Hall II was already in position when the builders erected the temple. They utilized it as the south wall of the temple at this point. They plastered this section of the city wall and Ilasamsos covered it with his great painting of the family of Konon and Bithnanaia (p. 76). The city wall at this point, therefore, was already in existence before the execution of this painting of Ilasamsos, dated to the latter part of the first century of our era. As we have already indicated (p. 45), no Roman had ever seen this place before the invasion of Trajan in A.D. 115. It is quite evident, therefore, that this part of the city wall is pre-Roman in date, and we must therefore conclude that the massive defenses along the northwest *wadi* were already in existence

before the Roman invasion of this region. Furthermore, these northwest walls seem to me in character precisely like the other ramparts of the city. Dating the fortress as pre-Roman, then, we must attribute it either to the Parthians or to the Macedonians, and I am inclined to attribute the great stronghold of Ṣâliḥîyah to the Parthians.

As far as the history of the frontier of the Roman Empire on the Euphrates is concerned, acceptance of the Parthian origin of the fortress of Dura would relieve us of the troublesome problem of accounting for the existence of such an important Roman stronghold in this region a generation before it was conquered by Roman



Fig. 38.—Our Wagons Drawn up for Departure from the Fortress of Dura

It was too early in the morning for successful photography. The five Syrian wagons (*arabanahs*) replaced our seven automobiles which were the property of the British and were returned to them at Albu Kamâl. In these wagons our expedition journeyed from Dura-Ṣâliḥîyah to Aleppo. Apology is due Major Wright-Warren for the unfair flank movement executed by the camera squad before he was able to don his uniform.

troops. It is quite clear that the place was occupied by a Roman garrison in the third century, and at that time the walls may have been strengthened or their thickness increased as shown in Plate V, 1. But there is nothing in the discoveries at Dura to indicate that a stable and lasting Roman frontier was established here two days' march outside the permanent boundary established by Diocletian 35 miles farther up the Euphrates at the mouth of the Khâbûr.

Regarding the identity of our fortified town with the Dura of the ancient sources, let it be noted that, according to Isidor of Charax, Dura was situated at a distance

of 10 *schoinoi* below the mouth of the Khâbûr,[1] that is, a matter of some 35 miles, just the distance between Ṣâliḥîyah (Dura) and the mouth of the Khâbûr (see above, p. 24). In A.D. 363 when the Emperor Julian followed the left bank of the Euphrates, after passing the Khâbûr he arrived in one day's march at Zaitha or Zautha, after which the second day's march brought him to Dura.[2] While the ancient sources thus speak of the town as if it were on the left bank of the river, it is quite evident that there could not have been more than a settlement guarding the Mesopotamian shore and making the bridgehead secure. Such references to the arrival of a traveler



Fig. 39.—Our Wagons Loading for Departure from Meyadîn, after the First Day's March

at a city on *one* shore of a river, while the traveler himself may really have been on the *other* shore, are quite comprehensible and occur elsewhere. In view of the reference to Dura which we found in the painting of the tribune, and the evidence found by Cumont disclosing also Europos as the other name of the town, there can be no doubt regarding the identity of the place now called Ṣâliḥîyah.

[1] Isidor of Charax, *Mans. Parth.*, 4 (ed. C. Mueller, *Geogr. graeci minores*, p. 248): From the walled town of Nabagath, past which the Khâbûr flows, 4 *schoinoi* to Asicha; thence to Dura, 6 *schoinoi;* total, 10.

[2] See Ammianus Marc. xxiii. 5. 8 and xxiv. 1. 5; also Zosimus iii. 14, and compare Isidor of Charax, *loc. cit.* G. Hoffmann (*op. cit.*, p. 166) discusses the position of Dura and arrives at the conclusion that it must be found nearly opposite the ruins of Kan-kaleh by Ṣâliḥîyah. For the verification of the foregoing reference I am indebted to Cumont's kindness.

Later.—Since the above was written, and just as this book goes to the press, I have received the following important communication from M. Cumont:

> Since your departure I have received the report of Commandant Renard on our excavations. It contains especially a study of the fortifications of Dura, accompanied by plans. In comparing it with the treatise of Philo of Byzantium (toward B.C. 200) I have gained the conviction that the actual walls, except certain partial rebuildings, are those which Nicanor raised when he founded the Greek colony. I made a communication concerning it to the *Académie* last month. It will ultimately appear in *Syria.* I did not fail to call attention therein to your observation on the date of the tower where the great fresco is painted. It had, furthermore, also been made by Commandant Renard.

There can be no doubt, therefore, regarding the pre-Roman date of the fortress of Dura. The doubt concerns only the choice between the Macedonians and the Parthians. M. Cumont believes the "walls" were the work of Nikanor, intending probably to leave the date of the vast *castellum* undetermined as yet. In any case it is obvious that the stronghold of Dura was built on oriental plans. It is oriental in architecture and displays just the characteristics which are found in Parthian buildings. If the fortress was built by Nikanor, he was following oriental models and we have in it, for example, one of the few Greek buildings which contains the arch.

IV

THE TEMPLE OF ZEUS-BAAL IN THE FORTRESS OF DURA

The builders of the Zeus-Baal temple selected a site quite removed from the center of the city, whose rectangular block plan is clearly discernible in the airplane photograph if not in the halftone print employed in this volume. Almost at the apex of the westernmost angle of the fortress is a rectangular bastion which was chosen to contain the temple of the gods of the city. The walls of this bastion at this point inclose a rectangular area oriented almost exactly to the four cardinal points.[1] In order to utilize the fortress walls as those of the temple, the latter was also oriented in the same way. The main axis of the temple therefore lies in an east and west line, with the entrance at the east and the shrine at the west. In this particular it is unlike the old Babylonian and Assyrian temples, which lie with their corners to the cardinal points. In ground plan, however, this temple of Zeus-Baal is identical with that of the old Babylonian temples. For it will be seen that a temple having an entrance from a court to transverse halls like this is clearly a sanctuary of the old Babylonian type, like the temple of *E-mach* at Babylon, for example.[2] Our hasty excavations with the East Indian troops (Fig. 54, p. 91) revealed enough of the structure to make these main arrangements of ground plan fairly certain. Since then these results have been confirmed and extended by the excavations of Cumont, which have disclosed a series of rooms on the right (north) of the court, as well as also on its front (east) side. In the center of the court, as we would have expected, Cumont's excavations also revealed an altar, while a little *naos* was found by him at the northwest corner of the court. We owe to M. Cumont's kindness the inclusion of the new data completing the ground plan (Fig. 56, p. 95).

On the west side of the court we had found two columns in front of the inner halls at the left (south) of their entrance, and I concluded there must have been two more on the right (north) of this entrance. These two columns have since been found by Cumont. The four columns form a *narthex* in front of the temple halls. Within the *narthex* four steps in the middle lead up to the front door of Hall I. This door is not in the axis of the court. It will have been crowned by an arch, without doubt, like the doors of the Babylonian temples. Hall I to which it gives access averages

[1] It was this fact which led us to suppose that the walls of the city as a whole were also oriented to the cardinal points, as in the plan published in *Syria*, Vol. III. The airplane view shows the incorrectness of this conclusion.

[2] See Koldewey, *Das wiedererstehende Babylon*, Abb. 38, p. 56.

4.04 meters by 7.38 meters in size.[1] We were not able to clear this hall, which lay deeply incumbered with rubbish (see Fig. 54). We cleared the north wall and found there the painting of the Roman tribune (Plate XXI) and the small paintings surrounding it (pp. 101–2). On the front wall of Hall I, north of the entrance door, we found also small paintings since reported fully by Cumont. We made no clearance at all of the south wall but could discern at the top, above the rubbish, traces of a larger painting later uncovered by Cumont and discussed herein (p. 90).



Fig. 40.—Sheikh Ramaḍân-Beg Ibn Shallâsh and a Group of His Tribesmen of the Albu Sarai above Deir ez-Zôr

The sheikh is the tall white figure at the left. He has turned away from the camera because of a disfigurement received in the Great War, part of his nose having been carried away by shrapnel. He is a shady character who at this time was receiving a subsidy from King Fayṣal and spending it on behalf of the Turkish Nationalists. Although he practically forced the writer to carry a confidential letter for him to Aleppo, he was most kind and hospitable and showed every kindness to the expedition in his great black *maḍif* (guest tent), visible here behind the people. Note the Euphrates cliffs at left.

Between Hall I and Hall II there is a large arched opening with a width of nearly 6 meters, that is, much too wide to be called a doorway. The spring of the arch which crowned it is preserved in the masonry near the top of the south abutment (see Plate VIII). It is almost certain that the roof of Hall I was likewise a vault.

[1] Our hurried measurements varied somewhat from these figures, which are those of Cumont's survey. His dimensions are used throughout this discussion of the temple.

Hall II, a transverse hall like the one before it, was the sanctuary proper. It is 4.30 meters wide and in length about 8.60 meters. It is therefore longer than Hall I, with which it almost merges owing to the great width of the arched connection between the two halls. The walls of the entire northern half of this Hall II have been quarried out or have fallen down into the *wadi* immediately below (Plate VI, 1). The south wall, which is preserved to a height of 7 meters (Plate VIII), is not a wall constructed in the course of erecting the temple. It is on the contrary a part of the original wall of the fortress in this west salience. It is clear at this point, therefore, that the fortress,



Fig. 41.—A Group of Arab Riflemen of Sheikh Ramaḍân-Beg Ibn Shallâsh

or at least this part of it, is older than the temple. This is especially evident in examining the wall between Hall I and Hall II, as seen at the left in Plate VIII. For the wall between the two halls mentioned is built of smaller blocks than the masonry of the fortress at this point, and, moreover, it does not engage with the fortress wall, i.e., the south wall of Hall II.[1] Traces at the top of this south wall would indicate that this hall was roofed by a lofty vault.

In the axis of the building, in the middle of the sanctuary (Hall II), is a shrine of semicircular ground plan, with the open side of the semicircle facing toward the

[1] This last observation was made from the photographs after my return from Mesopotamia, and does not, I regret to say, appear in my notes made on the spot.

front of the building, that is, eastward (see plan, Fig. 56, and Plate VI, 2). The niche in the center of the shrine was found empty as shown in the photograph. In the same shrine are two small niches, one on each side of the central niche. Of these two smaller niches the one on the south side is still preserved and may be seen in the photograph (Plate VI, 2). Both were likewise found empty. No door closing the front of the shrine, if it ever had one, is discernible in any of the traces we could find. This shrine closely resembles the niche containing the emperor's statue as it is found in the surviving legionary chapels.[1] Our shrine, preserved for only about one-third of its presumable original height, should doubtless be restored with a half-dome at the top, as in the examples shown by Domaszewski (*op. cit.*). It is remarkable to



Fig. 42.—The Head of Our Caravan Descending from the Plateau to the Euphrates near Tibni

find here a shrine so strikingly like those of the Roman legions of the west in a temple of unmistakably oriental ground plan.

The presence of the legionaries in the wall paintings of the temple, engaged in worshiping a group of divinities including the two local Fortunas (p. 97) so commonly worshiped by the Roman troops, shows that this temple served during the Roman occupation in the third century as a garrison chapel. It should be noted, however, that Cumont did not find under the shrine any traces of a subterranean treasury, so frequently placed there by the legions of the west. At the same time the wall graffiti found by Cumont show clearly that the temple was devoted to the worship of Zeus Megistos, or Baalsamin. Associated with this Zeus-Baal in the graffiti were also Yarhibol and Aglibol, the three forming the well-known triad of gods of Palmyra. The people of Dura, like the legionaries later forming its garrison, were no doubt largely of Palmyrenian origin and carried to Dura the gods of Palmyra.

[1]See Domaszewski, *Die Religion des roemischen Heeres*, Plate II, Fig. 4; also Cagnat, in Saglio-Pottier, *Dict. des Antiquités*, *s.v.* "Praetorium."

We must conclude, therefore, that this temple was originally erected by the people of Dura as a sanctuary sacred to the Palmyrenian triad: Zeus-Baal, Yarhibol, and Aglibol, and that the three niches in the shrine in Hall II were occupied by statues of these three divinities. The paintings which we found in this hall likewise show no connection with Rome or with legionary customs or ritual. They reveal furthermore the prominent part played by Konon, a noble civilian of the town, and his family in the original construction of the temple. These paintings, dated to the latter half of the first century of our era, and the inscription of Lysias (pp. 87–88), a member of Konon's family, recording his erection of a dwelling for the priests connected with the



Fig. 43.—Our Wagons in the Khan at Sabkhah

temple in A.D. 114, disclose to us quite unmistakably the fact that in this sanctuary we have an oriental temple which originally had nothing whatever to do with Rome or the worship of the emperors—a temple which had long existed and carried on its oriental ritual before the Roman occupation of the third century.

In finishing the interior walls of the structure the builders employed a lime plaster spread directly on the surface of the masonry, in preparation for the mural paintings with which the building was to be decorated. These painted wall decorations extended almost from the floor to the ceiling. At least the lower portion of an upper range of paintings was observable above the lower painting on the south wall of Hall II and may be seen in Plate VIII. That such mural paintings in the so-called pagan temples of Syria later furnished the models for the wall paintings of the Christian churches of

the same region cannot be doubted. When the overthrow of Zenobia and the destruction of Palmyra left Christianity a freer hand for the rapid conquest of Syria by the church, it is obvious that the temples which the Christians appropriated were decorated with just such paintings as these at ancient Dura. Indeed it is not difficult to imagine that such painters as Ilasamsos of Dura, after the disappearance of Palmyra, would easily accept Christianity. Under the control of the new faith these artists would no longer paint Zeus-Baal, Yarhibol, and Aglibol; but, following the same traditions in style, technique, and composition, the successors of Ilasamsos must have painted the virgin, the Savior, the apostles, the great Church Fathers, and the newly converted



Fig. 44.—Sheikh Ṣuwân of the Sabkhah Arabs above Deir ez-Zôr on the Upper Euphrates

The sheikh is the second figure to the left. The head of a powerful group of Arabs, he made a very straightforward impression. He based great hopes on President Wilson and the fourteen points, knowledge of which had reached him even in this far-away Arab wilderness. His sturdy son, very proud of a new Mauser rifle, is the fourth figure.

sovereigns, precisely as we have them in the mosaics of Ravenna, which are the lineal descendants of these mural paintings of ancient Dura.

Architecturally we could gain but fragmentary impressions of the building. It evidently, like the architecture of Babylonia, displayed only structural forms. Its apparent unity of plan is deceptive. The intrusion of so un-Babylonian an element as a frontal colonnade at the rear of the court in front of the inner halls suggests more of a façade than such buildings of Western Asia originally possessed; but this colonnade was not really along the *front* of the building, which should properly be

found in front of the court. The building was not considered enough of a unity to be exempt from extension and enlargement. The rooms immediately on the north of Halls I and II were not sufficient for the practical needs of the temple ritual, and a series of rooms along the north side of the court were afterward added. Outside the court on the east also a portico was erected, which turned eastward away from the temple and followed the city wall. One can easily imagine this outer porch as a place where much of the daily idling and gossiping of customary town life in the Orient commonly took place. Like the mosque, which is the descendant of the ancient oriental house and temple, the building really possessed no façade, properly speaking, and these extensions which it suffered did not violate any real unity of design.

V

THE WALL PAINTINGS OF THE ZEUS-BAAL TEMPLE

The interior of Halls I and II was elaborately decorated with wall paintings. Before proceeding to a detailed description of these paintings it may be well to dispose of the technical questions involved, in so far as the notes from my brief examination will permit. The walls are covered with a white lime plaster, rather smooth, but with considerable deviation from plane, and on the average about 2 to 2½ centimeters thick. The pigments are all water colors which have been mixed with some adhesive gum of such strength that the paint is still firm and hard. I noted the following colors and shades: black, white, maroon, red, brown, orange, purple, magenta, several shades of green, yellow, pale blue, and gray. Two distinct methods are noticeable. The contours of the figures are sometimes run in with black lines, like the early Italian primitives; other figures, however, are entirely without such contour lines. It is also noticeable that the *chiaroscuro* is not consistent in the same picture, but the light may be received from different directions in the same scene. Here and there, however, there is a total lack of any attention to the light and the tones are laid on flat. This seems to be the case especially in the figures in which the contours are plainly marked with black lines.

The collapse of the roofs has exposed the paintings to the rains—not directly, for the halls were filled with rubbish, largely made of dried mud. This rubbish, resting against the walls, was doubtless converted into soft mud by the rains, with the result that the surface of the paintings was covered by a grayish black film of dried mud, which it was impossible for us to remove. This film of mud may also have been deposited when the roof leaked before its collapse, as the mud of the sun-dried brick vaulting was washed down. The mud film may be seen especially on the white garments in Plates IX and X. *Under* this obscuring surface the colors were well preserved and bright, except as dimmed by the film of mud. Without being cleaned the paintings were exceedingly difficult to photograph. Professor Luckenbill, to whom I owe the photographs, struggled manfully with this difficulty and his results are most creditable. I made very full notes on the colors, and the color plates herein are reproduced from enlarged photographs, hand-colored in accordance with my notes. In the main the tones are probably approximately correct, although the modern color printer has in places put too much brightness in the tone. Our colored photographs are the only surviving records of this painted wall, now much mutilated by the Arabs, especially the row of heads at the top.

THE EARLIER GROUP OF PAINTINGS

HALL II, SOUTH WALL, C-D (PLATE VIII)

The Wall of Bithnanaia

It was the wall *C-D* in Hall II which was first noticed by Captain Murphy as bearing paintings and it was this wall which we found cleared when we first began work. The paintings which it bears are in two registers, beginning almost at the floor. They probably extended entirely to the ceiling, or at least to the spring of the vaulting. The upper register, however, has entirely disappeared, with the exception of the feet of one figure at the lower left-hand corner (Plate VIII). The plaster bearing the upper painting has fallen off but the wall survives to a height of nearly 7 meters above the chapel floor. The lower register bears the largest and most important painting in the chapel (Plate VIII). Indeed it is the most important monument thus far found



Fig. 45.—Our Horses Being Watered in the Euphrates for the Last Time, above Meskenah, Two Days' Journey from Aleppo

at Dura. It is an impressive composition 4.30 meters long and nearly 4 meters high. The top of the cornice over the whole scene is almost 4 meters from the floor.

The fallen plaster has carried away the upper right-hand portion of the lower painting, depriving us of one head, the major part of two more, and the top of a fourth. Otherwise the lower painting is almost intact. We shall call it the wall of Bithnanaia after the gorgeous lady who is so prominent in the painting. This ambitious composition consists of a row of eleven figures, eight filling the entire breadth of the available wall (4.30 meters) with three more in front of the eight mentioned, the whole group of eleven figures being flanked by an architectural background. A gorgeously appareled lady stands a little at the left of the middle, while on the right are ranged four men bearing green branches and on the left stand three ministrants who are carrying on religious ceremonies. Numbering these people from left to right, the figures one to eight, who form the main group, are curiously disconnected from

the architectural background against which they are placed. Let us consider first this architectural background, which is in several planes. In the main it is made up of three doorways. Out of the central doorway the lady (the fourth figure) seems to step forth. The two door leaves in this doorway are yellow and paneled and the one on the right is open. On the right of this door the yellow paneling continues to a double door behind the seventh and eighth figures. The right leaf of this last door is also open. On the left of the double door behind the lady, at the left end of the painting, is a porch with two piers, behind which is an open door. It also is a door of two leaves, one leaf being closed. While it would be difficult to determine what kind of a building the painter has here endeavored to represent, it is likely to have been some part of this chapel itself, in view of the ceremonies depicted.



Fig. 46.—Modern Aleppo and the Mound of the Ancient City

Aleppo was a small city kingdom as far back as the fifteenth century B.C. The mound covering the ancient walled town now rises in the midst of the modern city. It is here seen from the east, as we approached it fourteen days out from Baghdad.

With regard to the relation of the figures to the architecture, the first and second figures are depicted standing with feet nearly if not accurately on the floor, but the third figure places one foot on the base of a tall vase which belongs to the second figure. As this position of the foot is inconceivable, it raises the question whether the feet of the first and second figures are actually *on* a pink floor. This rectangle of pink may conceivably be intended to represent a vertical surface, a doorstep under the threshold (see Plate IX), a doorstep in a plane in advance of the black and white floor which begins on the right of the blue vase. The fourth figure (the lady) stands partially inside the middle doorway and evidently leans forward, bringing her head outside the door lintel (see Plate XI). The floor on which both she and the third figure stand is black, or black and white. The first to the fourth figures inclusive show some relation to the architecture against or in which they are placed; but the four figures at

the right, that is, the fifth to the eighth, stand, all four, with their feet far above their black and white floor, as if floating like phantoms (see Plate VIII). This is especially noticeable with the fifth figure, whose right foot projects over and far above the

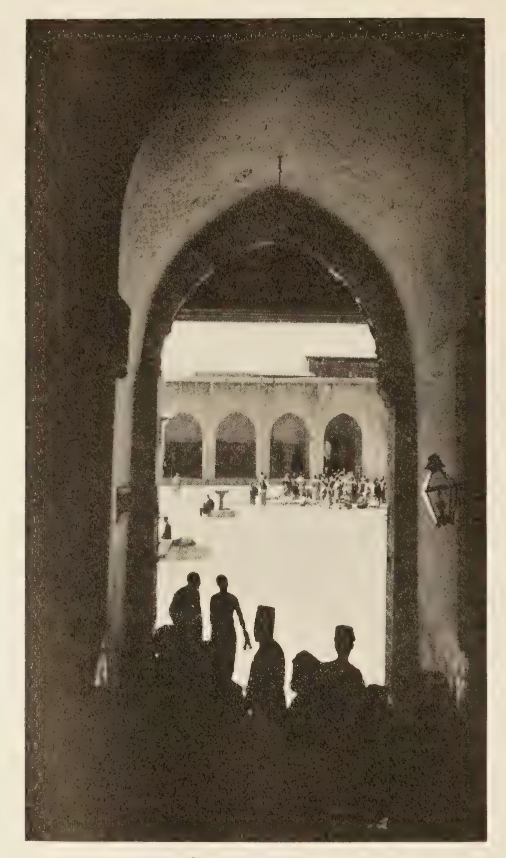


Fig. 47.—The Court of a Mosque in Aleppo

black floor behind the central doorway (see Plate XI). In front of the central doorway there seems to have been at least one step, which probably appears again also below the seventh figure and just behind the young girl (tenth figure, Plate XVIII) and may be in the same plane with the possible pink doorstep at the left (Plate IX). At the right

of this black step and below the fifth and sixth figures (Plate XI) one can discern the base of a square pier or a pilaster, over which the left foot of the fifth figure and the right of the sixth have been painted. Behind the seventh figure (Plate XVI) the lower edge of the panel of the (closed) door leaf cuts through the instep of his right foot. It is evident that these four figures (fifth to eighth) have been painted in either very unskilfully or as an unforeseen after-thought.

The three young people, the ninth, tenth, and eleventh figures (Plate VIII), who seem to stand below the row of eight adults, are in a very advanced plane and no traces of anything below their feet, nor even of their feet themselves, have survived.

If there is no homogeneity as between the architectural background and the figures placed against it, there is also a similar lack of proper correlation as between the figures themselves. This latter lack of correlation is so noticeable as to indicate that the painting is the work of two different men, working presumably at two different times. The first and the second figures, with the exception of the faces, disclose almost no shadows on the flesh forms, so that the legs are finished in flat tones, but the light in the faces is well treated, especially in the second figure (see Plates IX and X). Now in the architecture the light comes from the right and in the first and second figures it comes from the left. Turning to the others beyond the second (that is, to the third to eleventh figures), it is noticeable that the flesh forms do not display the black contour lines of the first and second figures. They are well treated as to light. The legs look round, with shadows along the edges and light in the middle. This is so different from the first and second figures that we must conclude that these two were done by a different hand. This conclusion is perhaps confirmed by the architecture, if we are correct in concluding that the floor under the first and second figures is pink while under the rest it is black or black and white. With regard to the composition as a whole, the grouping of the tall figures in a long line across the observer's line of vision strikingly suggests the similar grouping in the oldest Byzantine compositions at Ravenna (see Plate XXII). Furthermore, just as in our Dura painting, in the Ravenna mosaics all the figures face the observer. This question can be better understood, however, when we have examined the wall of the tribune (Plate XXI, and see pp. 94–101).

Turning to the details of the figures, the following matters are of consequence:

FIRST FIGURE (PLATES VIII, IX, AND XIII)

Figure of a man standing with weight on left foot, and right foot forward. He wears a sleeved garment hanging from the neck and shoulders almost to the ankles. It falls from the left shoulder down to the right leg and returns upward in front to fall over the extended left forearm. It is white with pink borders down each side of the middle of the front and is gathered in at the waist by a girdle with heavy folds. There is some effort to paint the light on the drapery. The head and the upper part of the ears are entirely covered by a close-fitting pink cap with a loose, full peaked

tip which falls over to the left. The man has a slight beard along the jaw and chin and a scanty moustache. His feet are shod with white shoes gathered in at the instep by a black cord over a tongue which rises in the middle in front. The flesh hue is a deep brown. A necklace, which he holds in his right hand, hangs down in a straight line; it is pink with a pale blue lotus flower forming each end. The cords for fastening the necklace issue from the lotus flowers like stems. A dumb-bell-like object (thunderbolt?) in his left hand has pink balls and pale blue stem.

SECOND FIGURE (PLATES VIII, IX, X, AND XII)

Figure of a tall man standing with weight on left foot, and right foot forward. He wears a sleeved garment which hangs from the neck to the lower calves; it is white



FIG. 48.—THE VALLEY OF THE ORONTES IN NORTH SYRIA
Our party in returning followed this valley southward to the sources of the river

with a narrow girdle knotted in front. There is an effort to paint the light on the folds of the garment. On his head he wears a tall conical pointed white cap painted in one flat tone and covering the tops of the ears. His feet are bare. The flesh hue is a deep brown. A vase beside him has a tall fluted base mounted on three legs, the whole being colored pale blue with black contour lines. The vase is filled with a transparent fluid, presumably water, into which the man inserts a branch or plant held in the right hand. The plant, which is rather faint, is done in black and, ascending with several drooping branches, crosses a pitcher held in the man's left hand. In this left hand, besides the pitcher already mentioned, the man holds a plate bearing two knives. The pitcher, the plate, and the knife blades are all pale blue, while the knife handles are pink.

THIRD FIGURE (PLATES VIII, IX, XI, XIII, AND XIV)

A tall man standing with weight on left foot, and right foot forward. He wears a sleeved garment hanging smooth without any of the folds of drapery observable in the second figure. On his head is a conical cap painted with noticeable observance of chiaroscuro and in this respect better than the similar cap worn by the second figure. The ears are not covered at the top by the cap as in the case of the second figure. The feet, which are bare, are without the black contours defining the feet of the second figure and, as in the case of the cap, there is an evident effort to paint the light and give the flesh forms roundness. The face exhibits soft contrasts without the hard lines observable in the face of the second figure. The eyes are fine; there is no sharp line marking the lower lid, as in the face of the second figure, only a soft



Fig. 49.—The Welcome Mediterranean Shores North of Beirût

dark shade. Like the first two men, he wears a scanty beard. The flesh hue is a deep brown. Beside him is a burning censer on a tall slender standard. The man extends his right hand above the censer so that it is enveloped in the rising flames, a gesture probably indicating that he is dropping incense into the fire. The flames are, strangely enough, indicated by black lines; the column is white with black contours. There is a vertical scratch which mars the left edge of this hand just where it is marked off from the yellow of the door in the background. In his left hand, just as in the case of the second figure, this man carries two knives, supported, in this case, however, upon a gray bowl. This vessel has a red interior, which may have been meant for either blood or wine. The knife blades, which are marred by the chipping of the plaster, are a graduated gray and totally different from those held by the second figure; the handles are red. Both the blades and the handles are skilfully done with treatment of the light and without the black contours shown in the second figure.

The points of the knife blades and the right-hand portion of the bowl are covered by the full sleeve of the fourth figure (the lady)—a curious error in composition, because the fourth figure clearly stands in a plane farther back than that of the third. In this connection it may be noted that the sleeve covering the man's upper arm just at the level of the knife handles has not been properly correlated with the yellow of the background and draws in too suddenly toward the man's left side. There is some indication that this bad drawing has been hastily corrected by inserting a thin triangular area of white just touching the left angle of the knife handles.



Fig. 50.—Records of Modern Conquest among the Memorials of Ancient Conquerors on the Mediterranean Cliffs at the Dog River North of Beirût

FOURTH FIGURE (PLATES VIII, XI, AND XV)

A gorgeously dressed woman standing with weight on left foot (barely visible) and right foot forward. Her right hand is raised to the level of her neck and held palm outward. The left arm apparently hangs down and is entirely concealed by the full folds of her mantle. She wears a long white overmantle with full sleeves hanging over a bodice of magenta-colored stuff. On her head is an elaborate cap with a rectangular front covered by a magenta-colored headcloth draped and hanging to the shoulders. Only the front of the cap shows under the draped headcloth. Her ears are adorned with earrings. About her neck she wears a collar having the appearance of four rings of metal. Hanging down on her breast is a necklace with pendants along the lower edge. Four of these pendants are visible on the right of the upraised

hand and two on the left of the thumb of the same hand. Below this necklace and perhaps suspended from it is an oval medallion in elaborately wrought metal work. The reticulate border is black, dotted with white spots, the whole border being against a gray background. The oval interior is purple, as if made up of some large precious stone like amethyst. Below the oval medallion is a round one with interior design made up of mixed colors in red, green, white, and purple, so mingled that the design cannot be discerned. It is possibly some precious stone of highly varied coloring. To this round medallion is appended an elaborate pendant in the form of a rectangular frame made up of three vertical rows of seven spherical beads alternately white, red, and green. In these details the color plate (Plate XI) is not strictly accurate. They may be discerned very faintly in Plate XV. Two pendants hang down from this rectangular bead design. Each of these two is made up of two cylindrical beads, a red one at the top and one of pearl gray just below it, while each of the two terminates in a globular pearl-gray bead. An effort has been made in Figure 57 (p. 99) to make the details of this elaborate Palmyrene jewelry more clear; but my field sketches were too hasty to make details always certain. As we have already noted, the sleeve of the lady's right arm curiously interferes with the bowl and the knives held by the third figure, almost as if the knives were thrust into her side. She wears low shoes painted white, which show partially below the white overgarment. The flesh hue of the lady is somewhat lighter in tone than that of the three ministrants (first, second, and third figures). The relation of the lady's figure to the architecture has already been discussed above, but it may be noted that she has not stepped forth so as to be entirely outside the open door. Her left foot, on which her weight seems to rest chiefly (her left shoulder is lower than her right), is within the doorway although her head is entirely outside of the lintel and is even projected against the ceiling of the portico.

FIFTH TO EIGHTH FIGURES (PLATES VIII AND XVI)

Four standing men, all with weight on the left foot, with right foot forward. Each has the right hand raised, palm outward, in a posture like that of the lady (fourth figure). The left hand, projecting from the garment, holds a green branch conventionally painted, which might be either the tip of a palm or an olive. The head of the eighth figure is entirely gone, those of the sixth and seventh nearly so, and also the upper part of the head of the fifth. No traces of a cap or headdress are visible but two masses of heavy black hair hang down on either side of the head of the fifth figure. As far as visible, all these men are smooth-shaven. This is certainly the case with the fifth and sixth figures and probably with the seventh. This lack of beard evidently indicates the youth of at least three of these four persons (see p. 88). All four wear purple undergarments over which hangs a white overgarment from the shoulders to the lower calves. This white overgarment, not unlike a draped toga or himation, is edged down the front with purple on both sides in such a way as at first

sight to look deceivingly like purple breeches, and we at first thought they were the well-known Persian breeches, but this is probably not the case. This white overgarment exposes the sleeves of a purple shirt and hangs over the left arm, just freeing the hand bearing the green branch. All these men wear low white shoes like the first figure but with white cords for tying. These figures are all painted with the same technique and in the same manner as the third and fourth. Their extraordinary lack of correlation with the floor and the architecture behind them, so that they float like phantoms, has already been noticed above.

NINTH FIGURE (PLATES VIII AND XVII)

A boy standing before the line of eight adults in a plane well in advance. The feet are gone, but the right hand is raised, palm outward, as in the case of the five persons above (fourth to eighth figures). The left hangs down and carries a small pitcher. The lad is bareheaded and wears a long white sleeved overgarment edged with red. The figure is very well painted.

TENTH FIGURE (PLATES VIII AND XVIII)

A girl standing before the eight adults in the same advanced plane as the ninth figure. The feet are gone, but her right hand is raised, palm outward, in the same posture as the ninth figure. The left arm hangs down and bears an object which was possibly a purse. Her cap, of the same form as that of the lady above, is covered with a full pink drape which falls down to mingle with her full garment, which is likewise pink. Under this pink outer garment is a black bodice. She wears earrings, and below a collar of four rings, like that of the lady above, is a similar elaborate necklace with two medallions and two pendants.

ELEVENTH FIGURE (PLATES VIII AND XIX)

A standing boy in the same advanced plane as the ninth and tenth figures. His feet also are gone, but his right hand is raised to the level of his breast and grasps the two ends of a necklace exactly like that which hangs straight from the hand of the first figure. The boy holds the necklace as it would be when the two ends are gathered together about the neck of a wearer, his hand grasping the tight cords between the two lotus flowers, which appear on either side of his hand. The left hand hangs down and is seemingly empty. The head is bare, the garment is like that of the ninth figure. General Cunningham stated to the writer that this was the best-painted face on the entire wall; but before we saw it some iconoclastic native, possibly a prowling Arab, had barbarously scratched the face.

It is evident, as we have before stated, that the scene depicts a religious ceremony with two ministrants at the left (second and third figures). These two are evidently priests. Each wears the pointed white cap, a white garment without any colored

border, has the feet bare, and is engaged in a cultus act, with much the same implements. The other nine figures are also sharing in the religious observances, for all the remaining figures except the eleventh (that is, fourth to tenth) stand in a posture of worship, with the right hand raised, palm outward. As is well known, this is a characteristic posture of Babylonian worship from the earliest times—a posture which we often find on early Babylonian seals. The act of thrusting the branch into the water also suggests old Babylonian ritual in the ceremony of the "tree of life," originally a palm branch thrust into a vase of water. We evidently have here one of the eclectic cults of Syria, about which we know so little, and in which we expect to find



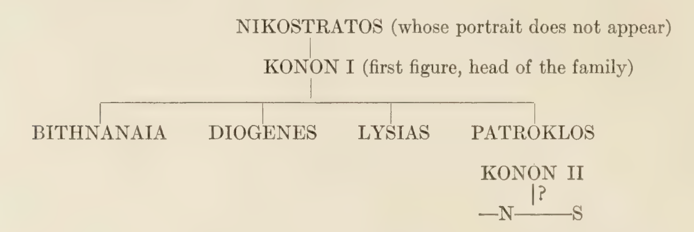
Fig. 51.—General Cunningham with Officers and Part of Our Expedition at the Southwest Gate of the Dura Fortress

General Cunningham stands at the left. To his interest in the wall paintings in the ancient fortress it was largely due that we had the opportunity of studying and recording them. The British East Indian troops have established a battery on the top of the fortified gate.

not only old Babylonian influences like those already mentioned, but later also a plentiful infusion of neo-Persian elements.

In this connection it is important to notice that the artist has inserted on the lower portions of seven figures the names of the persons depicted (Fig. 58, p. 101). These names reveal to us the fact that seven of the people depicted in the painting belong to one family, only the two priests and two of the three children being omitted. It is probable that the two children belong to the same family, and their names may

have been lost at the bottom of the painting where much has disappeared. We may therefore reconstruct the following family tree:



In this family group Konon I, the first figure standing at the extreme left separated from the others by the two priests, is head of the family. Beyond the two priests (that is toward the right, their left) are Konon I's four children, a daughter and three sons. The third son, Patroklos, has his son Konon II (grandson of Konon I) standing next to him (eighth figure). Of the three children in front, one whose name is not clearly preserved, was a son of Konon, perhaps Konon II, and in that case the group includes four generations.

In the names of these people, as in the art of the paintings surviving in this chapel, we note the obvious presence of elements both Greek and oriental. Although her father bore the Greek name Konon, the lady's name is evidently oriental. The restoration of the I in Bithnanaia, favored by the small size of the lacuna and the surviving traces, is certain; and it is obvious that we must recognize in the second part of this compound name the name of the well-known goddess Ναναῖα (II Macc. 1:13). With his customary sagacity Clermont-Ganneau has discussed early Syrian names of this form having בת (here Βιθ) as their first element.[1] To his list of names (*op. cit.*, p. 416) we should now add that of "Bithnanaia, daughter of Konon." To Clermont-Ganneau's discussion of the family relationships involved in names of this form we will not attempt to add anything further, but for the sake of readers who may not have followed the literature of the question we may recall Nöldeke's notice of the fact that in De Vogüé's *Syrie centrale*[2] the statue dedication inscription No. 29 bears the name of Zenobia in the form ספטמיא בתזבי = Septimia Bathzabbai, meaning "Septimia, daughter of Zabbaeus." Oberdick[3] has contended that filiation is indicated in Palmyrenian Aramaic by ברת (feminine of בר) and not by the Hebraizing form בת, so that when בת is found in Palmyrenian it is used as "filia doni," meaning "a woman possessing." He therefore renders Zenobia's Semitic name as "Daughter (= possessor)

[1] See Clermont-Ganneau, "Odeinat et Vaballat," *Revue Biblique*, XXIX (1920), pp. 382–419.

[2] *ZDMG*, XXIV (1870), p. 96.

[3] *Zeitschr. für die oesterr. Gymnasien*, XLI (1890), 699–703.

of Brilliance (בת צבי)." It cannot be said that this new name Bithnanaia favors Oberdick's contention, for the lady can hardly have been designated as *possessor* of the goddess Nanaia. On the other hand she might be called "daughter of Nanaia" without in any sense conflicting with the addition of her father's name in the genitive. Clermont-Ganneau's essay already cited should also be consulted on this point.

In contemplating this group of eleven people who look down upon the shrine in the middle of this transverse sanctuary hall, one cannot but feel the probability that the lady who occupies so prominent a position in the scene at the head of all the children of Konon the elder was a woman of rank and power, an Aramaean princess, reminding us, even in the form of her Semitic name, very much of Zenobia of Palmyra, which was but 140 miles distant. May she not have been a local ruler of this region, or the wife of one of the "duces," such as Zenobia was in the beginning?



Fig. 52.—Our Camp in the Ancient Fortress of Dura

At the right, the west end of the massive castellum; at the left in the background, the tents of Major C. T. Wright-Warren, who was commandant of the post. Our camp was in front of his tents. In the foreground is the white limestone tomb of a young British officer killed with all his party by the Arabs a short time before our arrival.

In any case there can be little doubt that the family of Konon, depicted here so prominently in the sanctuary of the temple, was the leading family of Dura. The names of Konon I and of his son Patroklos are mentioned in inscriptions found in the assembly building in the town by Cumont.[1] Lysias[2] (probably one of the unnamed

[1] *Comptes rendus* (1923), p. 22.

[2] The restoration ΛΥCΙΑC for the sixth name, first suggested by Torrey, exactly suits the surviving traces and is now confirmed by the inscription of Lysias in the court (p. 88). It may further be mentioned in this connection that the lower part of this painting is covered with numerous graffiti in such rapid cursive that they are difficult to read. In the few hours at our disposal it was quite impossible to spend any time on them. They have been collected since our visit by Cumont.

two children), son of Konon II and grandson of Patroklos, was the one who built a dwelling for the use of this temple alongside the court, and an inscription found in the court commemorates this pious act.[1] An interesting light is thrown upon the custom of granting to such influential families places of honor on the temple walls, by an inscription or memorandum on a portion of the wall of Hall I.[2] It designates an empty space as not yet assigned to anyone, and therefore still to be regarded as available for assignment to some personage of sufficient importance to claim it. The prominent place assigned to the family of Konon I is conclusive evidence of their power and importance.

The data furnished by this painting, combined with the other inscriptions, are quite conclusive evidence of the date to be assigned to the building and to the paintings. Konon I is mentioned in an inscription in the town which is dated in the year A.D. 61.[3] Lysias, son of Konon II and grandson of Patroklos, built his dwelling in the temple in A.D. 114.[4] It is evident that the painting was executed at a time when the children of Konon I were still young, for all of his sons are depicted as beardless, although in the case of Patroklos we must conclude that he was probably about forty years old. The chronology of the family may be reconstructed as follows:

NIKOSTRATOS. Probably born just before the beginning of the Christian Era, and already dead at the time of the great painting (about A.D. 80).

KONON. Probably born about A.D. 15; known to be living in A.D. 61; shown in painting (about A.D. 80) as about sixty-five years old.

PATROKLOS. Probably born about A.D. 35; shown in painting beardless although over forty years old (A.D. 80).

KONON II. Probably born about A.D. 55; shown beardless in painting at over twenty years of age (A.D. 80); built dwelling in Zeus temple in A.D. 114, when about fifty-nine years old.

UNNAMED SON. Probably born about A.D. 70; shown as a lad in painting in A.D. 80.

The fixed points in the foregoing scheme will not permit much shifting of the suggested dates. We may conclude with certainty that the painting was executed in the last quarter of the first century. The building of the temple may reach back to the middle decades of the same century, when Konon I was in the prime of life.

HALL II, WEST WALL, D–E (PLATE XX, 1)

The west or rear wall of Hall II is preserved only at the left (south) end (*D–E* on plan, Fig. 56). On this wall there was a large painting (Plate XX, 1) with figures on a considerably larger scale than on the adjoining south wall just described. In the foreground is a remarkable attempt to represent a stony landscape with scanty vegetation in the crannies. Crowning a hill is an architecturally developed rectangular base, perhaps an altar; but the upper part, with the right-hand corner, is gone. At

[1] *Comptes rendus* (1923), pp. 21 f. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 30–31. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 22. [4] *Ibid.*, pp. 21–22.

the left of the altar stood two men. Three legs only survive. The two feet which show are shod with shoes which turn up at the toes. These figures wear short, elaborately patterned kilts with rich gold-colored border. The figure at the left carries a tall shield, occupying the space at *D* directly next to the south wall at the left end of this west wall. The shield is decorated with the painting of a lady holding up her skirts with her left hand, her right hand raised in front but lost by damage to the wall. The only other trace of armor on these figures is what are probably greaves on the front of the legs. At the right of the so-called altar is a horse running off to



Fig. 53.—Our First Glimpse of the Paintings

The semicircular shrine (see plan, Fig. 56) covers the lower part of the great painting on the wall of Bithnanaia (Pl. VIII). This is the wall marked *A* in Pl. V, 2.

the right. Only his hind legs show. A curious decorated object, coming down, seemingly, from the back of the horse toward the feet of the man, ends in an elaborately bordered volute, which pushes into the landscape. Below, at the extreme right, in a part not included in the photograph (Plate XX, 1), are traces of a wheel, perhaps belonging to a chariot.

HALL II, EAST WALL, B–C (PLATE VIII)

Facing the wall just described and at right angles to the wall of Bithnanaia, the east wall of Hall II is plastered but bears no paintings, as may be seen in Plate VIII. On the thickness of this east wall (*A–B*) on the south side of the entrance to Hall II

and facing north is the figure of a priest (see Plate VIII, extreme left) practically identical in posture and equipment with the second figure on the wall of Bithnanaia. The plant which he is thrusting into the water is not, however, visible and his vase and standard are much less elaborate.

This completes the series of paintings in Hall II. It is evident that such subjects as the customs, the cultus equipment and the ceremonies being carried on, the identity, racial connection, origin, and so on, of these religious practices and of the people engaged in them, might be much more fully discussed; but they must be left to future study, the chief purpose of this report being to make the paintings accessible.

HALL I, SOUTH WALL

When the waning light forced us to cease work on the Zeus-Baal temple, we had been able to clear only the north and east walls of Hall I, and these only partially. The hall was still filled with rubbish, above which we could discern projecting traces of paintings on the south wall. It may be that these are the traces which were seen by Sarre (p. 57). It was with great reluctance that we were obliged to leave without investigating this hall farther. When it was cleared by Cumont, he found a door in the south wall. This of course reduced the amount of space available for decoration, and the painting which his clearance disclosed on this wall is not as ambitious a composition as that on the corresponding wall of Hall II; but it has furnished some very important and valuable data,[1] especially the name of the artist. In an architectural setting between truncated columns of pink hue, three standing figures, all men, are ranged across the observer's line of vision, as on the wall of Bithnanaia. Each figure is clothed in a sleeved tunic and a white mantle crossed by bands of various shades. All three are engaged in the same ritual act, dipping a leafy branch into a tall vase with the right hand, and with the left extending a blue plate as if for a libation. Cumont notes that these blue plates are evidently of the same blue enamel ware of which the débris in the town has furnished a number of examples. It is the same act of worship which we have also observed in Hall II in the great painting (Plate VIII). As in the great painting also, these three figures of Hall I face directly toward the observer. Beside the third personage we find leaning against one of the columns a child, of whom only the feet have survived. Similar paintings covered the wall at the right and above, but very little of them now survives.

It is evident that these three figures are intended to be portraits, for all three have their names appended, written in black paint as on the south wall in Hall II. The first two are of the same form as in Hall II: *Λυσίας Ἀχιεία* and *Λυσίας Βαργάτους*. In the third, however, we find far more than the name: *Ἀπολλοφάνην | Ἀθηνοδώρου τοῦ | Ζηνοδότου καὶ Ζη | νόδοτον τὸν ἐξάδελ | φον αὐτοῦ Ἰλάσαμσος | ἔγραφε* ("Ilasamsos has painted Apollophanes, the son of Athenodoros, the son of Zenodotos, and his first

[1] Cumont, *Les Travaux Archéologiques*, pp. 65–66.

cousin Zenodotos").[1] This signature by the artist himself is of far-reaching importance in the history of art. His name, meaning as it does "the Sun is god," is purely Semitic and reveals to us the author of these paintings in the Zeus-Baal temple as an oriental practicing the art of portraiture and composition. In view of the discovery of unmistakable efforts to paint the light by Egyptian artists at least as far back as the Nineteenth Dynasty in Egypt,[2] and probably already in the Eighteenth, these



FIG. 54.—BRITISH EAST INDIAN TROOPS AT OUR DISPOSITION FOR EXCAVATING THE GROUND PLAN OF THE TEMPLE IN THE ANCIENT FORTRESS OF DURA

The ancient floor level of the temple is at the feet of the workmen on the left. The high mound above and beyond them is rubbish covering the temple court and its first hall. It has since been removed by Cumont.

paintings of ancient Dura may fairly raise the question whether the Greek "shadow-painters" of the Hellenistic Age really originated the earliest chiaroscuro technique. It is not unlikely that Greek civilization borrowed this accomplishment, as it borrowed

[1] Cumont, *ibid.*, p. 66. "His first cousin Zenodotos" is of course the child standing beside Apollophanes, as Cumont has noted. The correction from Ἀπολλόδωρον to Ἀπολλοφάνην was kindly furnished by Cumont.

[2] In the *Bulletin* of the Metropolitan Museum of Art for December, 1922 (Part 2, p. 52), Mr. N. de Garis Davies calls attention to various instances of true shading in the Nineteenth Dynasty tomb of Queen Nefretiri at Thebes. This phenomenon here and also in the tomb of the official Userhet, who lived in the preceding reign of Seti I, had been already mentioned in Schäfer's second edition of his *Von ägyptischer Kunst* (Leipzig, 1922, pp. 57–58) as the result of a letter from Davies elaborating a paragraph in his review of Schäfer's first edition (1919) in the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, VII

so many others, from the culture of the Orient, and then, as they so often did, the Greeks raised the new acquisition to a degree of excellence and refinement which it had never known before. It is not a little significant that the "shadow-painters" arose in Greece after the penetration of the Orient by the conquests of Alexander the Great, conquests which carried the Greeks directly across the Syrian communities where the art of Ilasamsos flourished. Compositions of this style, as Cumont has noted,[1] displaying human figures separated by columns of pink color, were still produced in Syria in the ninth century of our era and were found by Musil at Ḳuṣeir ᶜAmra.[2] These later examples suggest the persistence of an ancient oriental school long at home on this soil. Such artists as Ilasamsos were available at Palmyra in the age of her splendor, and these paintings of Dura have furnished us the best surviving examples of the art of Palmyra.

THE LATER GROUP OF PAINTINGS

When I first published the Dura paintings in the pages of *Syria*, it was impossible to establish their date with precision. The inscriptions since then recovered by Cumont have made it clear that the large paintings in the southern portions of both Hall I and Hall II comprise a group which we must date in the last quarter of the first century; while the small paintings from the northern portion of Hall I, especially the painting of the Roman tribune engaged in worship with his troops, are to be dated about a century and a half later, that is, about the middle of the first half of the third century. They likewise form a group by themselves, distinguished most obviously by their small size, but also by a style less clear and defined, displaying far less ability to treat the light. They resemble hastily thrown together sketches, blocking out blurred compositions which were never later given any precision of detail. They are also much more limited in their color resources. On the whole they represent a decline of art from the high standard of the age of Ilasamsos.

(1921), p. 225. Yet Davies in his review feels that "it is pretty clear that it is only the deepened colour that has been observed, and not its origin in form as a cast shadow." He adds: "Although I know no instance of it under Akhenaten [Ikhnaton, XVIII. Dynasty], I think his artists must have introduced it, or at least have pointed the way." In the same journal (p. 4) Davies has denied a use of orpiment for the high lights in an Eighteenth Dynasty painting of the Tell el-Amarna age which Petrie (p. 221) is equally positive shows this characteristic. It has even been suggested in the Metropolitan Museum's booklet on *The Tomb of Perneb* (1916) that "in ceiling paintings . . . . found by the Museum's Expedition [meaning paintings of the reign preceding Ikhnaton's], the rotundity of the bodies of flying ducks and pigeons . . . . is indicated by this means [shading with pigments]." But these Eighteenth Dynasty examples will require further study before the nature of the facts they illustrate is clearly understood. Acknowledgment is due Dr. Caroline Ransom Williams and Dr. T. George Allen for their kindness in collecting the foregoing references to the published evidence.

[1] *Les Travaux Archéologiques*, p. 66.

[2] Musil, *Ḳuṣejr ᶜAmra*, Plates XV, XVII, XVIII.



Fig. 55.—Airplane View of the Ancient Fortress of Dura-Ṣâliḥîyah

By kindness of M. Cumont, General Gouraud, and the French Air Force

HALL I, NORTH WALL (PLATE XXI)

The Wall of the Roman Tribune

While the north wall of Hall II has entirely fallen down into the deep *wadi* on the north and west (Plate VI, 1), the north wall of Hall I (in front of Hall II) is preserved to a height of some 5 or 6 feet from the floor. This north wall, facing south, is entirely covered with paintings from the floor to the top, as far as preserved. As we turned to work on this wall the sun was low in the west, and our observations were interrupted by approaching dusk. There are other very interesting scenes on this wall, but we were able to record only the important one at the right end. Professor Luckenbill, using the last 13×18 cm. film plate we had, secured the best negative possible in the waning light. The original is much faded and not easy to discern, especially at the top. The uncleared rubbish prevented moving the camera far enough back to include on the plate the left end of the scene, so that the camera lost at this point one of the three standing gods and also one of the two sitting goddesses. Important details, owing to the weakness of the fading daylight, were likewise lacking in places on our plate. The scene was, however, so important that it seemed desirable to include it in those published in *Syria* (Vol. III, Plate XLVIII). Since then Cumont's clearance has made fuller study of the painting possible, and I am indebted to him for the detailed drawing published herewith (Plate XXI), which he has already published in his preliminary report.[1]

The painting is a small one, about 1.75 meters wide and nearly a meter high. It depicts a scene of worship with statues of five divinities at the left and a group of worshipers at the right. The latter are separated from the statues by a small burning altar or censer and a Roman *signifer* holding his standard upright. The worshipers are standing in two groups of eight each, with five additional heads indistinctly visible in the background behind these sixteen. The nearer group are in two planes with four in each plane, the heads of each four being on the same level; the more distant group are either in a plane *much* farther back, or they stand on a raised step behind the front group, for their figures project, from the waist up, above the heads of the nearer group. The second group are also ranged in two planes of four each, with all eight heads on the same level. The five additional heads visible behind the second group are very summarily done and are about on the same level. In so far as the figures are visible, they all stand with the weight on the right leg and the left swung backward. The left hand rests on the girdle in front and grasps some object which is sometimes the sword hilt, while the right is raised and held palm outward in the posture of worship which we found also in the great painting (Plate VIII). The only exception

[1] *Comptes rendus* (January, 1923), p. 27. While the foregoing reasons made it inadvisable to include in this publication the color plate of the wall of the tribune published in *Syria*, some readers may find the colors in that plate of value; but for details only the drawing furnished by Cumont should be consulted.

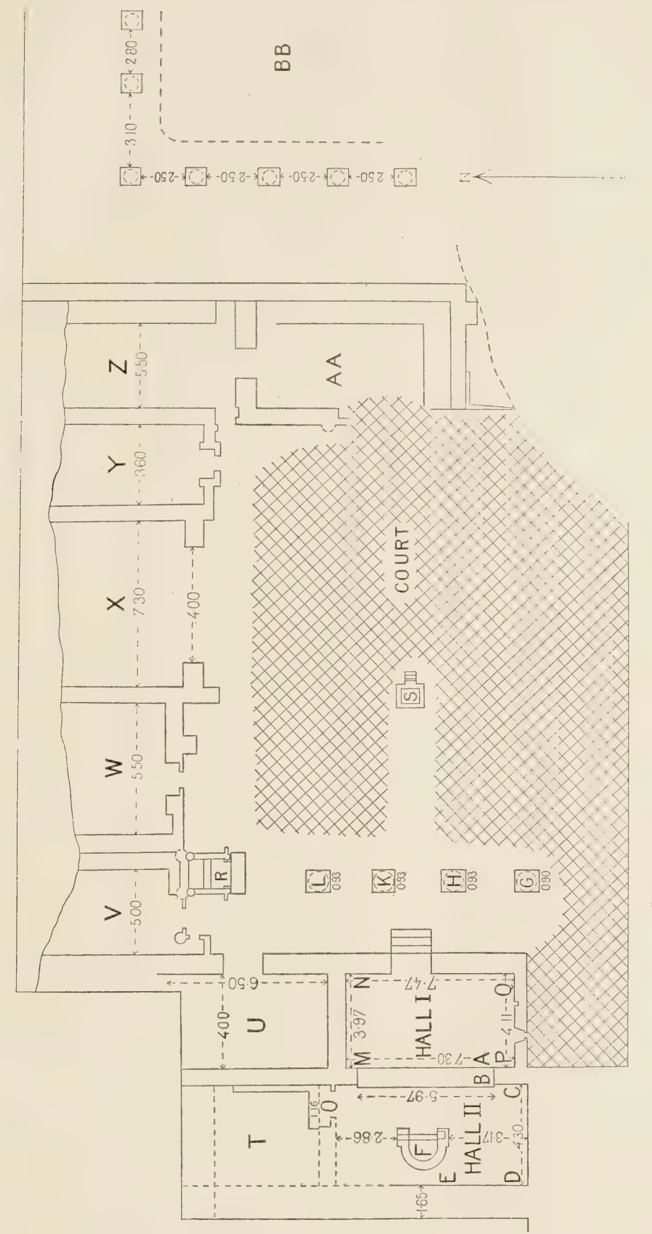


Fig. 56.—Plan of the Zeus-Baal Temple in the Fortress of Dura
With additions kindly furnished by M. Cumont

is the tribune himself. All the faces are depicted *en face,* so that these twenty-two worshipers (including the *signifer*) all face the observer and not the divinities they are worshiping. The details of costume are sufficiently clear in the sketch, but it should be noted that the kilts worn by the nearer group of eight are all edged along the bottom with pink, which may have faded from the red or purple *clavus.* This portion of the rear group of eight cannot be seen.

The nearer group are headed by a Roman officer, who has written before his figure the inscription:

IVL·TEREN
TIVS·TRIB.

painted in black letters. As we should expect, the inscription is in Latin uncials, not in the Greek uncials which we have had in the great painting. The tribune carries in his left hand what seems to be a roll and may contain the ritual of the service which he is evidently leading. With his right hand he is dropping incense into the burning censer before him, like the priest (third figure) in the great painting (Plate VIII), who also uses his right hand for this office. An examination of available lists of Roman tribunes has not revealed the name of Julius Terentius elsewhere, but it cannot be doubted that he was the commander of the Roman garrison, which included a cohort of Palmyrenians, occupying the place in A.D. 229 or 230 according to a Latin inscription on a rebuilt block found by Cumont in front of the shrine. It is badly mutilated, but as restored by Cagnat it is dedicated by the Palmyrenians of the XXth Cohort to Alexander Severus in A.D. 229 or 230.[1]

The further group is led by a priest who is probably to be understood as standing beside the tribune a little farther in the background. The inscription before his figure, in Greek uncials, is as follows:

ΘΕΜΗϹ///	Θέμης
ΜΟΚΙΜϹ///	Μοκίμο[υ]
ΙΕΡΕΥϹ	ἱερεύς

Cumont has noted Θαίμης (for Θέμης) and Μόκιμος as names common enough in the surviving Palmyrenian records. We therefore find here one "Themes, son of Mokimos, priest," doubtless a Palmyrenian priest, assisting the Roman commandant of Dura in the worship of the city gods.

The service is evidently the official worship of the military garrison, and as such is headed not only by the tribune, who is the Roman commandant of the garrison, but also by the Roman standard. This standard is the well-known *vexillum*[2] consisting as usual of a flagstaff, possibly a lance shaft, held vertically, with a transverse stick at the top from which is suspended a banner of some red textile edged with yellow

[1] *Comptes rendus* (January, 1923), p. 18.

[2] Compare Domaszewski, *Die Fahnen im römischen Heere*, p. 77 (Fig. 94).

or gold and fringed below. It is surmounted by a yellow ring, possibly a wreath, but no traces of the hand sometimes visible at this point are discernible. Unfortunately the red field of the banner contains no inscription or insignia by which the body of troops to which the *vexillum* belonged may be identified, nor the name of the emperor, which was sometimes inserted here. The inscription just cited, however, is probably sufficient for this identification. It is of interest to notice that the field of the banner is red, in accordance with the familiar passage in Plutarch's *Life of Fabius*, regarding the red (*κόκκινος*) battle flag floating over the tent of Varro before the battle of Cannae, and several other references.[1] In so far as I know, our painting furnishes the first example of such a *vexillum* in which the color is preserved. The costume of the *signifer* is not sufficiently clear to discover whether he wears an animal's skin as on the arch of Constantine.

At the left of the standard are two rows of divinities. The top row consists of three statues, each standing on a circular base. They are figures of men in military costume and accoutrement, and the new drawing, together with the inscriptions found since our visit, must essentially alter our conclusion that they were to be considered as statues (*imagines*) of the deified Roman emperors. On learning that the graffiti show the temple to have been sacred to the three chief gods of Palmyra, Baalsamin ("Lord of the sky," that is, Zeus-Baal), Yarhibol, and Aglibol, Clermont-Ganneau at once suggested that the three statues depicted in this scene of worship must be the three Palmyrenian gods to whom the temple was dedicated. This suggestion, highly probable in itself, is rendered certain by the detail of the insignia and equipment borne by the figures and first clearly disclosed by the drawing. The figure in the middle, which is the tallest in the group, bears in the left hand a celestial globe, showing us that we have here the "Lord of the sky." The two military figures standing on his either hand must therefore be Yarhibol and Aglibol. It is interesting to observe that all three display a bright golden aureole behind the head, showing that, like the deified emperors later, they have already been solarized. It was from such figures as these that the aureole passed over into Christian painting.

Even more instructive are the figures of the two goddesses sitting below the three Palmyrenian gods. They are two figures of Tyche, or goddesses of Fortune such as became very common in Roman times, whether as bronze figures, on coins, or in wall paintings, depicted bearing a horn of plenty and sometimes with a rudder to indicate guidance of the fortunes of men. Our two Fortunas, however, are quite clearly derived from that form of the goddess which was sculptured by the most gifted of the several artists who bore the name of Eutychides. He was the pupil of Lysippos and in the year B.C. 300 he wrought a statue of the patron goddess of Antioch which was widely celebrated (PAUSANIAS vi. 2. 7). In a relaxed, almost reclining posture, the goddess sat upon a rock. Upon her head she wore a crown like a fortified tower;

[1] See Saglio-Pottier, *s.v.* "Signa," p. 1310 (note 6).

she bore a sheaf or a stalk of grain in her hand, and beneath her feet emerged the river god of the Orontes. This figure has survived to us on the coins of Antioch and in a marble copy now in the Vatican.

Fortunately for us, our two goddesses bear inscriptions designating them as "Tyche of Dura" (on the right) and "Tyche of Palmyra" (on the left). Each goddess displays an aureole and wears on her head a castle showing that she is the personification of a strong city, a symbol often seen on the heads of Syrian goddesses and already employed by Eutychides. Below each figure there are additional symbols of importance, which appear for the first time in the drawing. For here our photographic plate did not cover the left-hand goddess nor include the lower portion of the scene under the other goddess—a loss which seriously interfered with a proper understanding of the two goddesses. As Cumont has recognized, below the rocks on which the right-hand goddess sits there is the figure of a man immersed above his middle in water in which he is swimming. This is evidently a personification of the Euphrates, above which Dura lies, while the child at the right rising from the waters is Dura itself, which owes its origin to the river and enjoys the favor of the goddess, who lays her hand protectingly upon the child's head. Similarly under the rocks on which the other goddess sits appears the figure of a woman placing her hand upon her breast, who personifies the springs flowing from beneath Palmyra, which are the sources of its life and sustenance. Above the personified waters of Palmyra sits a lion, the symbol of the city, on the head of which the goddess lays her protecting hand.

Such Fortunas as these had in Roman times become the personification of good luck commonly worshiped by the legionaries, and were localized much as we find the Virgin to be in later times, so that each city or even each legion might have its own Fortuna or Tyche. That the Roman troops levied in Palmyra and serving in the garrison of Dura in the first quarter of the third century should continue their worship of their Palmyrenian Fortuna, would be most natural. It cannot be doubted that the other Fortuna, "Tyche of Dura," is the patroness of the city in which our temple is situated.[1] This painting has thus preserved to us the ancient name of the city with which we are dealing—a name otherwise unknown in the documents recovered at Ṣâliḥîyah. The identification is rendered certain by the new Greek or Macedonian name given to the place by Nikanor, compared with the reference found by Cumont in one of the parchments recovered during his excavations. The inhabitants of our city are called in this passage *ἄνω ὄντες Εὐρωπαῖοι*, "citizens of Europos by ancestry,"[2] and as we have seen (p. 38), Europos is affirmed by Isidor of Charax to have been the Greek name of

[1] As I suggested in *Syria*, III, 203, and as Cumont has made still more clear by the disclosure of the situation of the city within the fortress of Ṣâliḥîyah. In view of this evidence the suggestion of G. Hoffmann (Sarre and Herzfeld, *op. cit.*, pp. 394–95) that the ancient name of Dura was ΓΑΛΑΓΑΛΑ is untenable.

[2] Cumont, *Les Travaux Archéologiques*, pp. 69–70.

Dura. The fertile plain of Khana-Mari on the east side of the river would obviously be closely connected with its ruling city on the west side. The references in the ancient sources, which place our city on the left (east) bank of the Euphrates, doubtless refer to a stronghold which would naturally protect the river crossing at the other end, like the bridgeheads of later times, and might easily acquire the same name as the city proper on the right (west) bank of the river.[1]

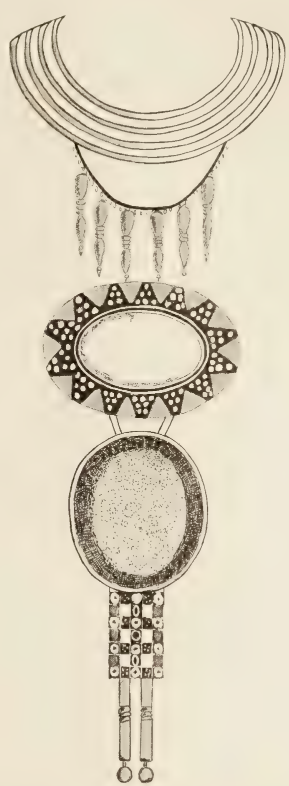


Fig. 57.—Collar, Necklace, and Pectoral Ornaments of the Lady Bithnanaia

See description, pp. 82–83

This painting raises some interesting questions concerning the composition as a whole. Attention has already been called to the fact that the worshipers all face the observer and not the gods and goddesses they worship. It will be noticed also that the divinities likewise face the observer rather than their worshipers. It is obvious that all the figures in the composition, human and divine, must be turned around 90 degrees: the worshipers toward the left and the divinities toward the right. Such a change, however, at once involves us in difficulties with the ground plan and the planes in which the figures now appear. It is evident that we are viewing the divinities from in front, so that the chief god would be in the middle, not behind the god nearest to the worshipers, as he now seems to be. In other words, we are viewing the three gods exactly as they would be seen by the worshipers in front of them. If we turn their bodies around 90 degrees to the right we shall have ranged them single file with the right-hand god at the head of the file toward the worshipers. It is evident that such was not their position as conceived by the artist. To place them as they must have been, and as the position of the niches in the shrine in the temple (p. 71) shows they certainly were, we must not only turn the three figures around 90 degrees to the right, but we must also shift the position of the plane in which they stand and make it nearly parallel with the observer's line of vision. That is to say, the middle god (Baalsamin) when turned around will remain on the same spot, but the other two gods on his left and right must continue to stand on his left and right after he has been turned around.

[1] See Cumont, *Comptes rendus* (January, 1923), p. 38.

They will then be standing in a plane at right angles to that which they now occupy. The position of the worshipers is simpler. If we leave the ground plan of their feet on the stage, as it were, just as they now are, merely turning them around 90 degrees to the left, we shall have replaced them very nearly as they ought to appear. It should be noted that in so doing we should not be changing the direction in which they extend their right arms in the posture of worship, that is, toward the divinities. The artist did not venture to be consistent and represent their right arms as extended toward the observer in their present position, as he should have done. He has made an exception of their right arms and represented them extended toward the divinities as they in real fact were.

A consideration of similar questions in connection with the great painting (Plate VIII) discloses an essentially identical disregard of the actual spatial relations and at the same time furnishes interesting confirmation of our conclusions regarding the painting of the tribune. In the great painting, however, this disregard is less evident, owing to the fact that the artist has not depicted the divinities on the wall. This is doubtless due to the fact that the artist (Ilasamsos) was painting in the same room where the shrine containing the images of the three great gods also stood. He conceives the images as actually present and therefore does not paint them. That this is in fact the conception of the artist in the great painting is shown by the fact that the right arms of the worshipers are extended straight out toward the observer, that is, toward the shrine and the images of the gods in the middle of the hall. A comparison of Plate VIII and the plan of Hall II (p. 95) will make this fact evident. Why should the arms of the worshipers in the scene of the tribune be extended in worship toward the left, and in the great painting (Plate VIII) directly toward the observer? Because in both cases the direction depicted is that of the images of the gods: in the first case on the wall, in the second in the shrine in the same room. This analysis of the artist's treatment of spatial relations is of importance in the proper appraisement of this ancient Palmyrenian art. Such disregard of spatial relations is essentially oriental and goes far back in the history of art in the Orient. It is quite in keeping with the fact that the only artist at Dura whose name we know was an oriental. There can be little doubt that he was practicing his art in accordance with inherited tradition transmitted from far earlier oriental culture.

The presence of a Roman tribune worshiping with his troops in this temple on the outermost oriental frontier of the Roman Empire is, historically speaking, only of casual interest. The fact that he has had himself depicted on the temple walls thus engaged in worship is of far greater importance. He and his comrades are the easternmost soldiery of Rome ever found depicted on the monuments. That he treated with respect the painted memorials of the noble families of Dura elsewhere preserved on the walls of the temple, like the great painting of Konon's family executed by Ilasamsos a century and a half earlier, is worthy of note. Julius Terentius as Roman

commandant of the stronghold of Dura, might easily have chosen for himself more extensive and more prominent space on the walls of the temple halls. The scene in which he appears is less than 2 meters long, while the family of Konon occupy the entire wall in the sanctuary itself with eleven life-size figures. Nevertheless, the fact that the tribune has had himself painted here at all, with his name appended to his figure, shows a self-consciousness which reminds us of the custom, first observable under Marcus Aurelius, of permitting the tribunes to record themselves as having erected the emperor's statues.[1] In these temple paintings the Roman tribune has slipped into the social and religious position once occupied by such noble families as that of

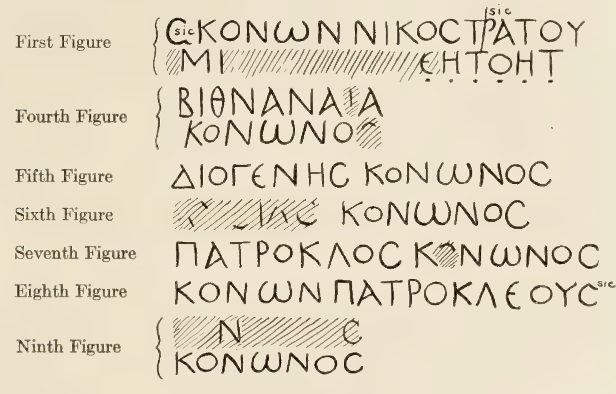


Fig. 58.—Inscriptions on the Wall of Bithnanaia

A study of the photographs since our return to America has revealed two short inscriptions above the right shoulder of the second figure. Immediately above the right shoulder is the inscription in two lines: ΚΟΝΩΝ ΝΙΚΟCΤΡΑΤΟΥ. This must refer to the *first* figure. At the top, and ending at the corner of the open door behind the head of the second figure, is a 4-line inscription of which prolonged study by a skilled Greek epigrapher might possibly result in a reading. In the course of our hurried single day's work these inscriptions were not discerned.

Konon. But he, and perhaps other influential people of Dura in the first quarter of the third century, were no longer able to secure for their commissions any artists comparable in ability with Ilasamsos of four to five generations earlier.

On the same wall with that of the tribune, as well as on the neighboring space on the front (east) wall of the same hall (I), are other small paintings belonging to the later group with which we are now engaged.[2] Like the scene of the tribune, these

[1] Domaszewski, *Die Religion des römischen Heeres*, p. 69.

[2] We saw these smaller paintings around and near that of the tribune, but there was no time even to note their subjects. The following description is taken entirely from Cumont, *Les Travaux Archéologiques*, pp. 68–69, and *Comptes rendus* (January, 1923).

smaller paintings are far inferior in execution to the work of Ilasamsos. In subject-matter they are largely obscure.

At the left of the painting of the tribune are several small scenes inclosed in rectangular, painted frames. The upper register, of which the top is fragmentary, displays a reclining woman, to whom a servant crowned with roses carries a dish of food—a scene which reminds Cumont of the "funerary banquet," so common at Palmyra. Farther along four ministrants are presenting offerings on as many altars. The lower register is subdivided into several small scenes: Hercules supported on his club; a young man, the right hand lifted in the posture of worship; a she-goat, a ram, a woman with an aureole about her head standing with face toward the front; and three other persons wearing draped costumes. Below these pictures the twenty-four letters of the Greek alphabet are inscribed in large characters. These letters, the symbols of the elements of the world and the celestial bodies, which the same name στοιχεῖα designates, possessed for the ancients a sacred character, and they are frequently found employed in magic on the phylacteries and in astrology as substitutes for the twelve signs of the zodiac. In our temple also they certainly have a religious significance, which it is difficult to define exactly.

On the neighboring pier weapons are depicted. The bow, the quiver, and arrows recall the fact that the Palmyrenians were archers of repute and served as *sagittarii* in the Roman army. These *sagittarii* are furthermore mentioned in a Latin *graffito* traced on the wall of one of the towers of the inclosure, on which is also painted in black and red a curious talisman against the evil eye: a poniard and a harpoon are directed against the pupil of a large eye, which is likewise assailed by a bird and some serpents.

Finally the east wall, between the entrance door and the south wall, is decorated with two superimposed scenes which are closely related. The lower one of the two is the only one entirely preserved. In a landscape where several gnarled shrubs appear, a man is seated on a rock, with his head somberly resting on his left hand; three companions advance extending their arms toward him, and as a characteristic detail the third carries a long cudgel or crutch and appears to be a cripple. These same personages differently grouped reappear in the upper register, which is seriously damaged. The interpretation of this scene is still to be found.

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2.—Northwest Angle of Castellum, Looking a Little East of North

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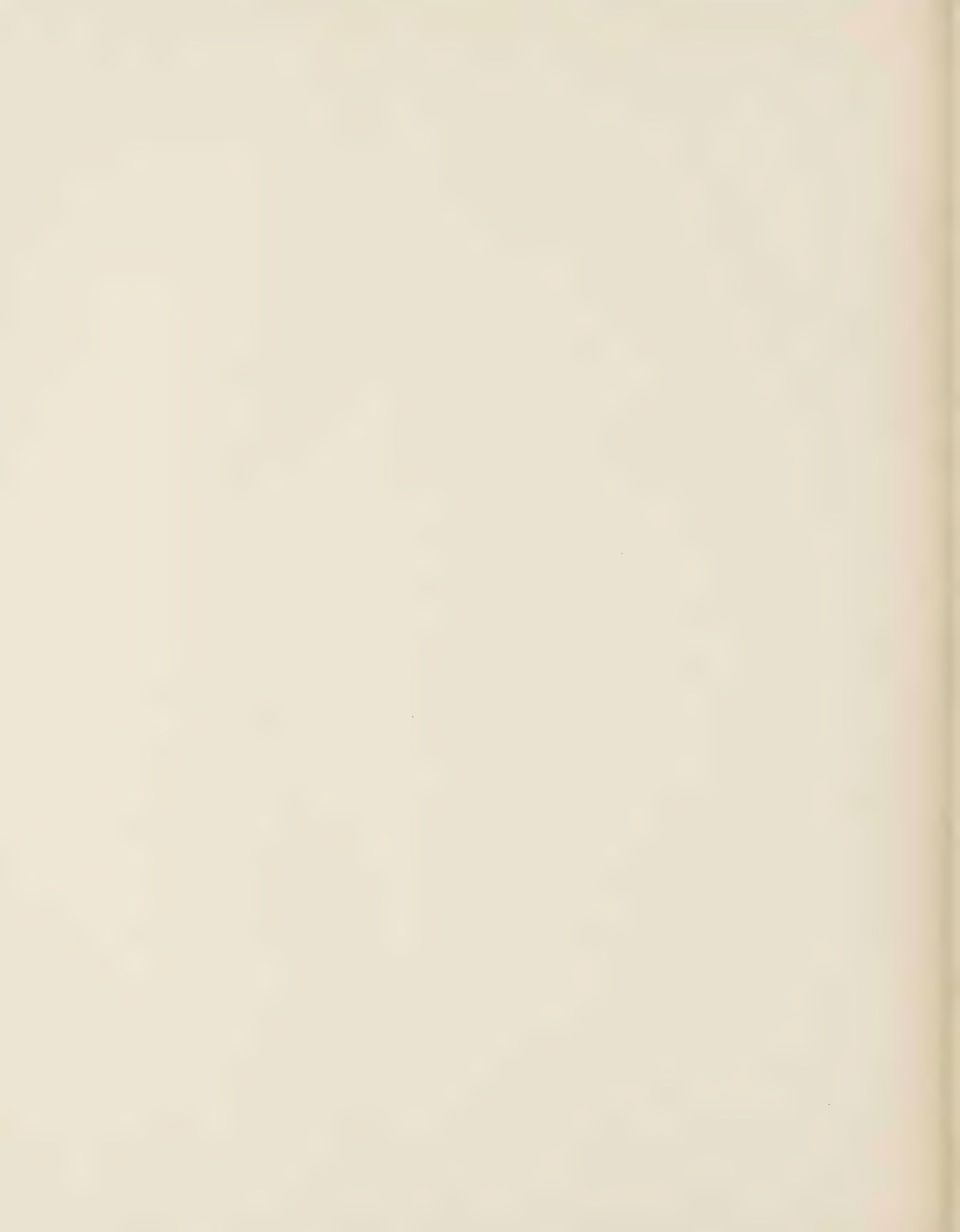


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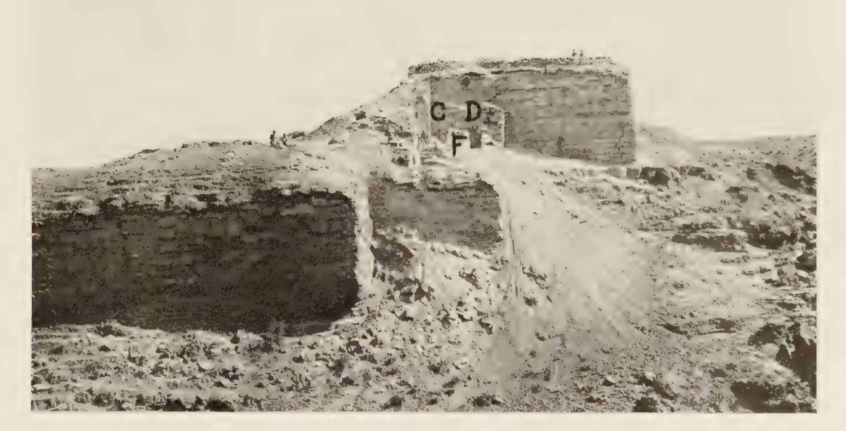
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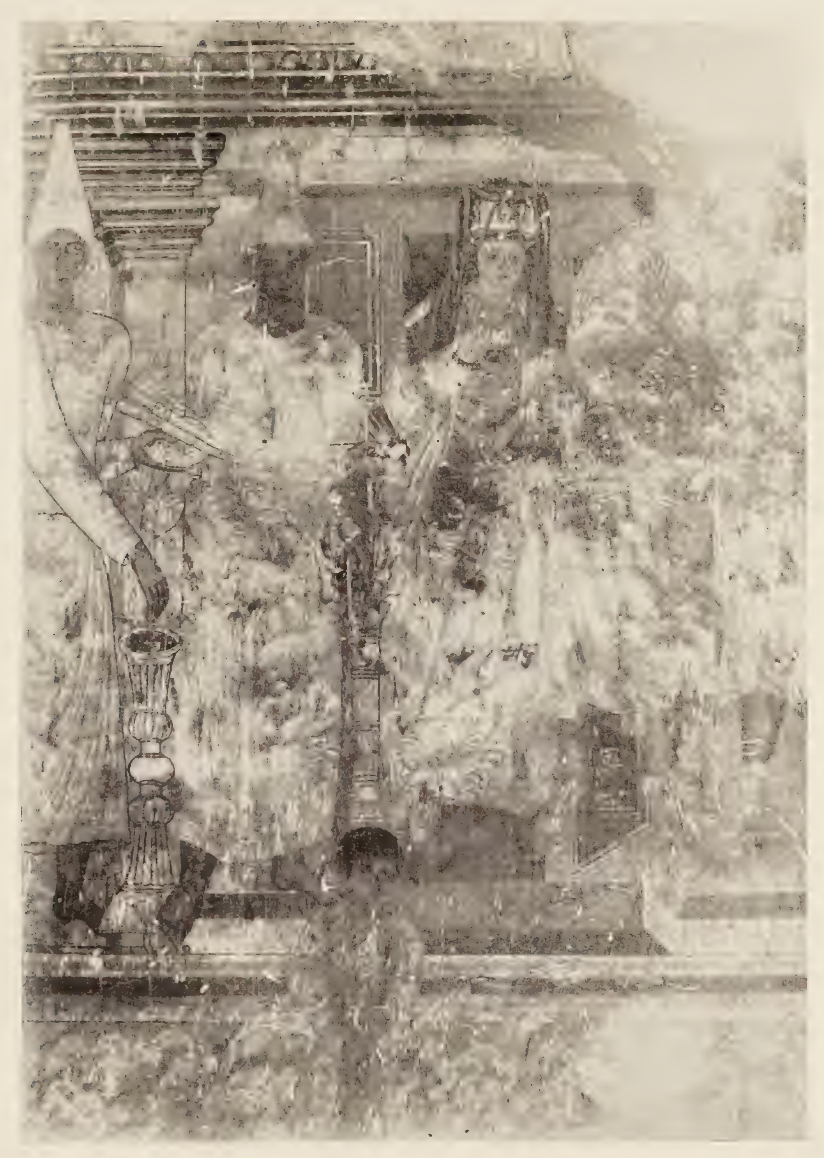
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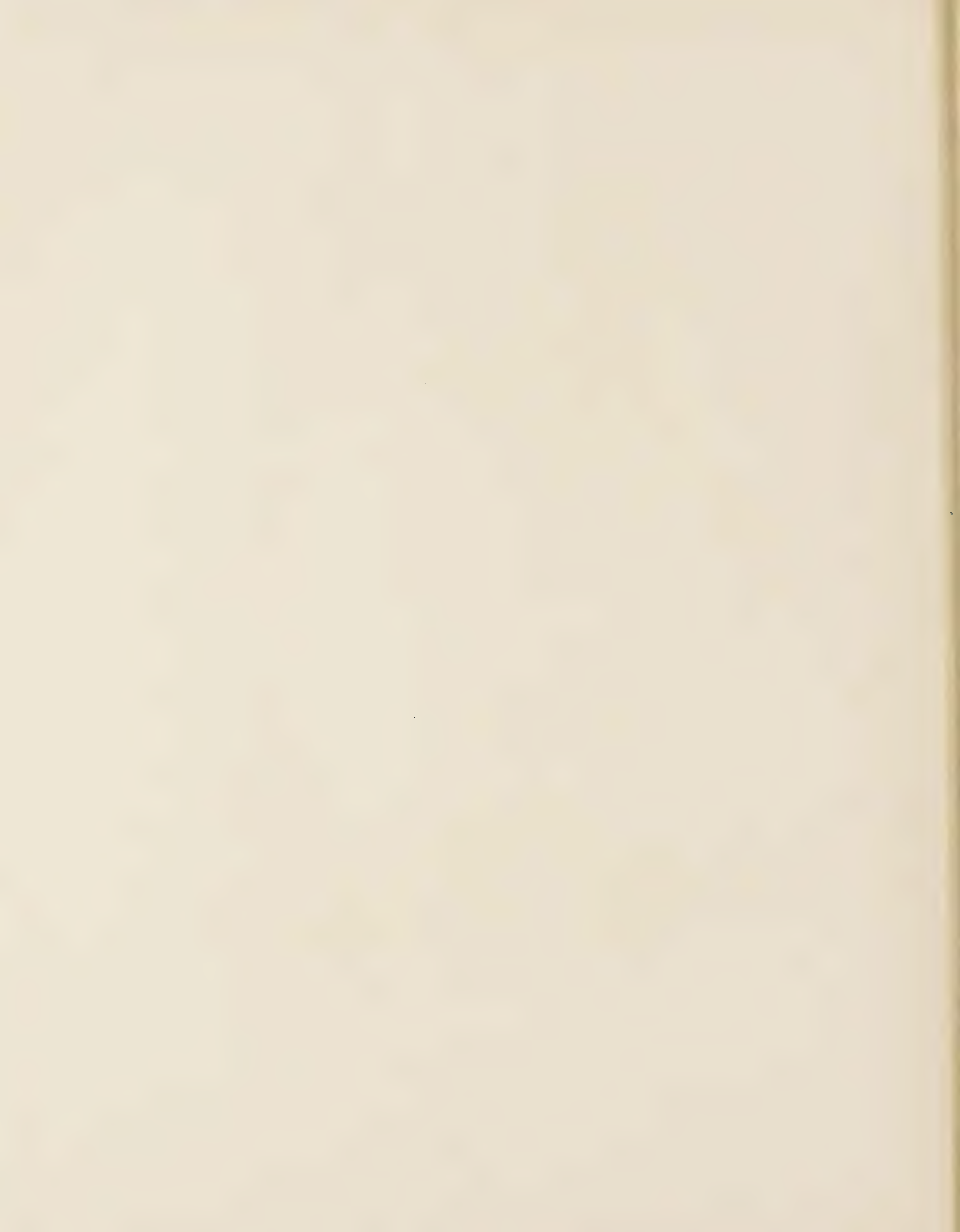


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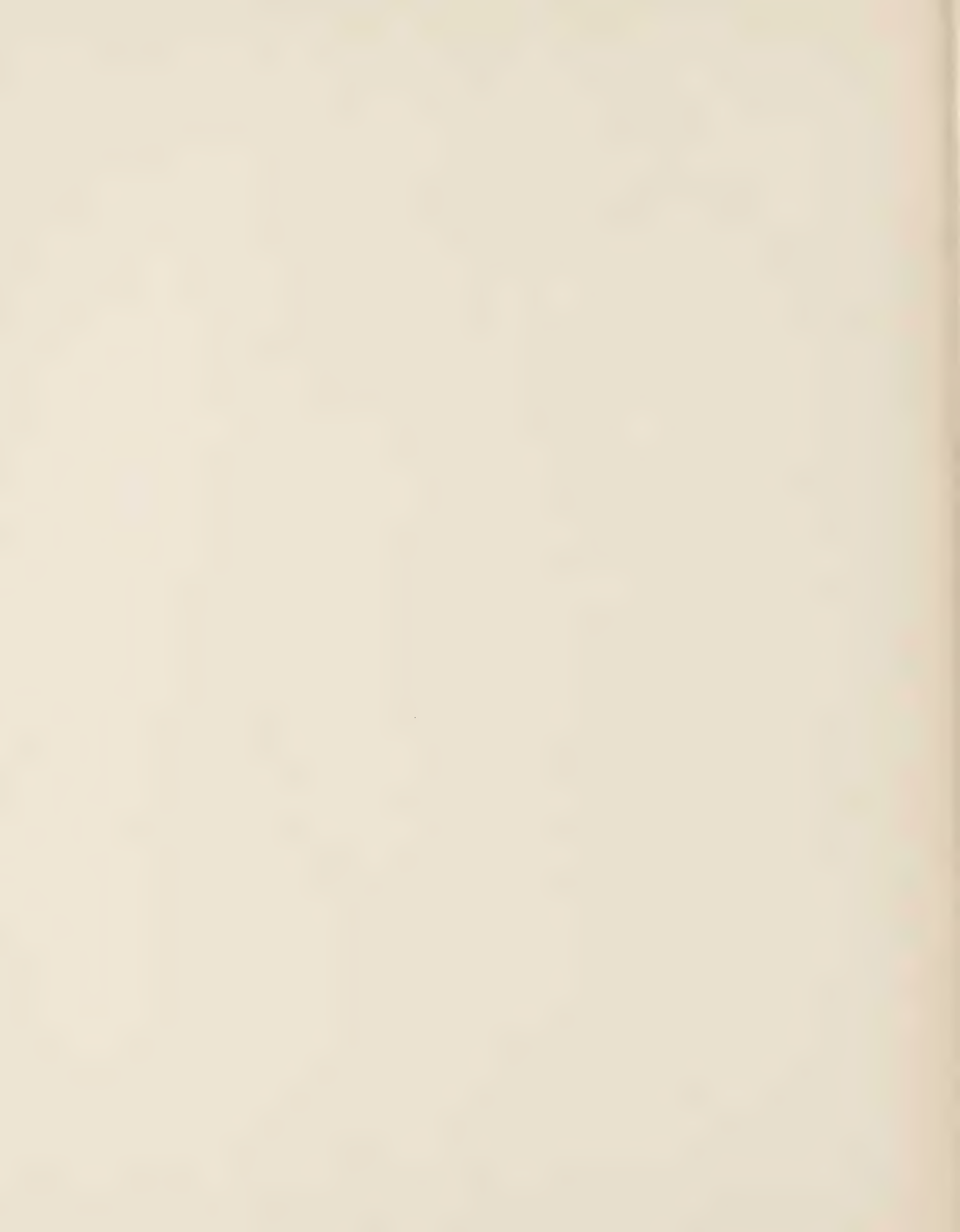


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Drawing kindly furnished by M. Cumont

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